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A Mosque in Mosul Similar to that which Marks the Reputed Tomb of Jonah

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A JOURNEY FROM THE PERSIAN GULF TO THE BLACK SEA

BY

WILLIAM WARE[illegible]

WITH 48 ILLUSTRATIONS

G. P. PU[illegible]
NEW YORK AND LONDON
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THE GATE OF ASIA

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To

MY KINSMAN

EDWIN WARFIELD

OF BALTIMORE

TO WHOSE COMPANIONSHIP ON THE JOURNEY HEREIN RECOUNTED
I OWE THE SUCCESS OF MY STUDIES IN

THE GATE OF ASIA

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The Gate of Asia

CHAPTER I

THE GATE OF ASIA

THE great advances that have been made in the study of geography in recent years have done much to reduce that subject to a genuine science, by correlating the mass of physical details that a generation ago were looked upon as interesting and important, but illogically combined, facts. We have come to realize the important relationship that exists between geographical divisions and mankind. We have learned that the most closely connected parts of the world are those in which the sympathies of the human inhabitants are most closely knit together. The nation has always been the primary basis of geographic division, but the great empires of today render such a basis complicated, and cause a most unscientific division into two inco-ordinate subjects, political and physical geography. The latter divides the world into continents and seas, without reference

to the distribution of mankind. The new geography seeks to combine these two unsatisfactory divisions into a single science, and makes its divisions, not according to land masses, or political control, but according to civilizations.

In the Eastern Hemisphere we find, in the northern part, two great groups of civilizations, each distinguished from the other by marked peculiarities; the western we call European, the eastern Asiatic. There is nothing new in that; question arises when we seek the boundary between these two groups. In the north this is almost impossible to discover because of the blending of races under the Mongol and Muscovite empires. But these are both comparatively isolated peoples, whose influence, on account of the physiographic character of their native lands, has been felt so little by the more southerly nations as to be negligible.

The difficult line to draw is that separating Mediterranean Europe from the typical Asiatic civilizations of Iran, India, and China. On the physical basis this line was drawn from the Caucasus, through the Black Sea and the Bosphorus, to Egypt, making Asia include Anatolia and Syria.

But the greatest influence in European civilization came from Syria, the bond that held the nations together during the great crises of their history, the religion of Jesus Christ. Mathematics, too, and astronomy, the bases of our boasted science, were first learned there, and there is an influential Semitic population in almost every

European city. Syria is therefore closely tied up with the West, and its influence in Asia has amounted to practically nothing. Anatolia too has had similar relations. We constantly acknowledge our debt to Greek art and literature. True, most of us think of Athens and Sparta in that connection. But the Greek architecture we are most prone to copy is Ionian, the architecture of Ephesus and Sardes, on the other side of the Ægean; our favourite Greek literature too is scarcely Plato, or Sophocles, but the Homeric poems, unquestionably of Anatolian origin. And the same civilization exists in Ionia today as existed there in the days when Aryan culture first appeared; the coast cities of Asia Minor are as Greek as any in Greece, many of them more so.

The Hellenic empire once included these lands and spread eastward to Babylonia and Assyria, representatives of a civilization that has influenced Europe through Syria, the first centre of Semitic culture. The Roman Empire extended to the same boundaries, and all these lands are ruled by Turkey today; and who can doubt that Turkey is a European power?

The forces of Asiatic invasion have pressed toward Europe time after time. One power, the Ottoman, has succeeded in permanently crossing the old boundary of Greek and Roman influence, but once across it, has had to sever its connections with Asia for ever, and adopt European civilization. Despite Turkish rule the nations of Syria,

Anatolia, and ancient Assyria and Armenia have changed but little, and remain today European in their relations.

Similarly a European invasion of Asia was once successful, and in Iran we have a people of European race, with an Asiatic civilization. And thoroughly Asiatic it has become; its influence is felt to the eastward, not at all in the West. Over and over again it has beaten at the gates of Europe; and at Marathon and Salamis, at Arbela and Nehavend, the Persian people have been forced back of that boundary line which today remains the westernmost limit of their empire. They too have a Semitic religion, forced on them by Arab conquerors whose yoke they soon afterward threw off. But the Mohammedanism of Persia is of the Shia schism, a sect directly antagonistic to that of Arabia and Turkey, while the spread of Islam in Asia has been due to Persian influence not to Semitic, which has always been almost non-existent, comparable only with that of such Western nations as Portugal or Italy.

I would therefore draw the line between East and West in such a way as to leave the Turkish Empire to the west and Persia to the east. Nor is this irreconcilable with the physical features, as we might naturally expect. It is the line that separates the lowlands of the Mediterranean basin from the Iranian plateau and the Indian Ocean. It is a line drawn from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea, which thus become the gateposts,

between which have passed back and forth the armies of the rival empires that have sought in vain to cross the natural boundary line, the real boundary line between Europe and Asia.

This then is the Gate of Asia. Its historical interest may well be imagined. Its ethnic interest is no less, for in it the rival civilizations are still struggling incessantly for supremacy. Its scenic beauty may be inferred from the fact that its mountains and plains have proved such effective barriers in the past. Furthermore, with the gradual decay of the Eastern powers, the Western nations are reaching out toward the Gate of Asia, and we may now expect it to occupy the central position in the Asiatic jealousies of the European empires.

It is to give the reader some idea of this important but obscure part of the world that I have written the following pages.

CHAPTER II

UP THE TIGRIS TO BAGDAD

THE building of the Bagdad Railway will soon make the city of the *Arabian Nights* accessible from the Mediterranean. But at present the only route by which modern conveyances are available is via the Persian Gulf from India. The British India Steam Navigation Company carries the English mails from Bombay, via Kurachi, on the coast of Sind, to the Persian Gulf ports and Busra, whence a Bagdad company, Messrs. Lynch, carry them in river steamers to the city of the kalifs. By this route I had elected to start my journey, and I left Bombay in one of the British India steamers.

At Kurachi I joined Edwin Warfield, who was to accompany me on the long journey from India to Constantinople. The object of our expedition was to pursue certain scientific studies in this borderland of Asia, which had appealed to me especially because I believed the unnoticed and comparatively insignificant mountains of Kurdistan formed an important link between the mountain systems of Europe and Asia. I must confess

however that the most fascinating scientific studies are generally overshadowed by the intense human interest that gathers around these Eastern lands. It was therefore with thoughts of romantic Bagdad uppermost in our minds that we crossed the Arabian Sea, and started our six-day voyage up the Persian Gulf, to the frontiers of Turkey.

This voyage is a most interesting one for, though the shores of the Gulf are barren and bear a bad reputation, there is a grandeur that is peculiar to their rugged skylines, and a strong note of adventure in the tales that are repeated of ordinary daily happenings among the coastal towns and upon the tepid, oily waters. We stopped at Muscat, a hot, white Arab city with a little rock-bound harbour, protected by miniature castles.

We anchored well outside the forbidding promontories, and despite the fact that a very high sea was running, were quickly surrounded by a swarm of *belems*, the long, narrow canoes of the Gulf. The port doctor gave us permission to go ashore and we got into one of the *belems* by going down the gangplank and leaping at the narrow craft as it rose on the summit of a wave. Then we were paddled into the harbour and, with the utmost skill, were landed through the surf on a shingly beach.

As we walked through the streets of the little dirty Arab town with its picturesque but diseased populace, we could scarcely believe that it was once the capital of an empire that stretched from

the Persian Gulf to Zanzibar. In those days the Sultan of Muscat was the tyrant of the Indian Ocean. The colonies and trading stations of this thalassocrat were planted throughout the Indies, as well as on the African coast, and even as far as China. He controlled the pearl, ivory, and black slave markets, and grew rich on the products of Arabia and the farther Indies. Today his successor is subject to British rule, with the position of a native potentate under the government of Bombay. He lives in his once imperial city in a tawdry palace and occupies himself in making apologies for the misdeeds of his unruly subjects.

We dropped in to see the American consul who had a tale to tell. He had gone a few miles from the coast with two Americans who were after date shoots for a California plantation. They got out well enough, but were waylaid on the return trip, and fired on. Fortunately, the Arab is a notoriously bad shot, so no one was hit. But it was a close call and the British resident called on the Sultan for an explanation. He sent for the chief of the guilty tribe and that gentleman expressed his great concern at the insult that had been offered the consul, and said that his young men had made a mistake. It seems they took the party for Englishmen; had they known they were Americans, and consuls, they would have shown no such discourtesy.

Muscat is surrounded by barren cliffs that closely hem it in, and the walls and streets are

glaring white. It was comfortable enough on that February day, but in summer the heat is terrific. The situation of Aden is salubrious compared with it.

The most profitable trade in this part of the world a few years ago was the illicit export of arms from the British ports of Muscat and Bahrein to the barren shores of Persia and Beluchistan. There they were received by caravans and carried into Afghanistan, whence they found their way into the hands of the tribesmen on the north-western frontier of India. This trade was mostly in the hands of a group of coastal tribes whose principal source of revenue for generations has been piracy, an occupation which they took to on the suppression of the slave trade. Their stock was smuggled to them from the ports, loaded into their small sailing vessels, in some lonely place under the lee of a rocky islet, and carried across the Gulf to some equally secret cove on the Persian side. Finding that port and customs police were unable to cope with this evil, and that it was increasing to an alarming extent, the British Government sent a couple of antiquated cruisers up into the tainted waters and established a regular blockade.

So far this plan has succeeded very well but its continued success depends upon unrelaxed vigilance. In their encounters with the pirates his Majesty's bluejackets generally come out ahead, but there are times when they get the worst of it. Their enemies have one trick that has not infre-

quently proved fatal. The chase in shallow waters has to be carried on by cutters, and the pirates often make no resistance when overhauled, on account of the superior armament of their attackers. So they come about in the lee of an island in such a way that the cutter can only come alongside on their lee side. One of the heavy latteen sails is allowed to hang carelessly over that side, bellying out with the light breeze that finds its way over the island, while several of the crew strive to lash it to the spar. But when the cutter comes up they cut the fastenings and drop the whole mass on the English sailors. Immediately the Arabs take to their oars and are off among the devious channels, perhaps pouring a volley of small arms into the sail by way of a farewell. A few experiences of this sort taught the British officers to approach the most innocent looking craft from the windward only. But there were other tricks and I doubt not there will be more, as long as rifles are worth their weight in gold on the Afghan border.

We met H. M. S. *Perseus* on our way up the Gulf and hove to while she sent for her mail and fresh vegetables, which were taken off in cutters. This vessel was the centre of interest at that time because she had just lost a cutter, containing an officer and thirteen men, who were on patrol duty. What became of these men was never known; a passenger ship picked up an oar, and the empty cutter was found several weeks later, but there

was no trace of the men, nor any indication of the tragedy by which they had lost their lives.

We stopped later at Bushire, the centre of British influence in southern Persia. The consul has a gunboat and a force of Indian troops to back him up, and the town is therefore fairly quiet. But the interior is quite a different matter. The roads are absolutely unsafe, on account of the depredations of two different bodies, the tribesmen and the road guards, members of the Persian gendarmerie. The former have always been plunderers, either as soldiers in the Shah's armies, or as gentlemen of the road, which is their present status. The latter have received practically no pay since Russia began the systematic destruction of Persia's financial integrity. So they make a practice of lifting what they can from passing caravans for the protection they do not pretend to afford. They are now provided in part with Swedish officers, whose chief aim is to get them shut up in barracks where they can at least do no harm. Once in a while it has been necessary to take them out against the Kizzil Bash tribesmen. But they refuse to attack unless they are in overwhelming force; and in that case they are wont to slaughter their enemy to a man and plunder his stronghold, decamping in small parties loaded with loot, despite the efforts of their officers.

The only troops in the interior at the time of our visit were two companies of Deccan riflemen, stationed at Shiraz, a hundred miles from Bushire.

These men were practically in a state of siege and in constant danger, increased by the fact that Shiraz is the religious centre of southern Persia and one of the most fanatical cities in the Mohammedan world. No little stir was created shortly before our arrival by the killing of one of the officers; and several riflemen had also lost their lives. They are quite helpless and can do nothing to protect the roads. The British consul at Bushire estimated that, in the course of a year, the losses on the hundred and fifty miles of road between the two places amounting to one hundred thousand pounds sterling.

Early in the morning of the sixth day of the voyage we entered the Shatt-el-Arab, the combined Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Both banks were covered with groves of date palms, among which appeared occasionally a little group of mud houses or a flock of sheep. A British oil syndicate has a shipping station on the Persian side of the river—which here forms the international boundary—but otherwise we saw no considerable group of buildings until we lay off the Persian town of Mohammerah. It is now a shipping point of no little importance, which will greatly increase upon the completion of the projected railway into the interior to Shuster and Dizful, cities of great importance which are now isolated by the wild tribes that keep the roads practically impassable. This may be the first line of railway in Persia if the Russians fail to push their plans for opening

communication by rail with Tabriz and Tehran. This is a matter of no little importance, for the progress of civilization in Persia has been sadly hampered by the fact that internal prejudice and external jealousy have united to prevent the building of railways.

Mohammerah is lost amid groves of palms, and nothing was to be seen ashore but a few white walls amid the green, and the riverside palace of the Sheikh of Mohammerah. This gentleman has been so friendly to the English that he is accorded a salute by every vessel of that nation that passes his extensive flat-roofed seraglio. When we dropped anchor in midstream off the town we soon became the centre of a swarm of *belems* and high-pooped dhows, the former for passengers, the latter for cargo.

We stopped only for a short time and then were off again between the beautiful rows of palms. Among them began to appear balconied houses of great size, homes of rich landholders. These became more and more frequent until we dropped anchor, late in the afternoon, before the town of Busrah. There were a few steamers in the stream, and the bank was lined with characterless brick buildings half hidden among palm-trees.

We had no time to examine the town, for we were just able to catch one of Messrs. Lynch's steamboats for Bagdad, five hundred miles away up the Tigris. So we bade farewell to the officers of the Gulf steamer, and our fellow-passenger, and

debarked our goods into a couple of *belems*. As we did so we were favoured by a Turk in European garb who claimed to be a customs officer and camped upon us until we should be able to hire him to get off. This we succeeded in doing when we reached the river steamer, sending him away happy with a varied assortment of shillings and rupees.

It was quite dark as he left us and we found ourselves on a barge, loaded with bales, that was lashed to the steamer's starboard side. Over this we climbed and entered the brightly lighted cabin of the little flat, shallow-draft river steamer, that was to be our home for the coming week. Here we met the genial captain, a short, stout man in a formal cutaway coat, striped trousers, and flowered vest, his regular costume, as we discovered, afloat or ashore. He assigned us to a couple of large and comfortable staterooms and warned us of the dinner hour, for he was chief steward as well as skipper.

He proved to be a rare good fellow and a most congenial companion. As we sat together at dinner, our first in Turkey, he told us something of Busrah. For a week the city had been in a state of siege and he had not been able to leave. The besiegers were an Arab tribe under a certain Sheikh Abdi, a sort of free lance of the desert, who led his tribe whither he would, or could, regardless of the Turkish Government or the recognized pasture rights of others. He had encroached

Typical Arab Villagers at Kut

upon the lands occupied by the people of the city, and it was feared by the populace that he would enter it, which he doubtless did not at all intend to do. One night an alarm was spread and all the troops were hurried out in the dark to the edge of cultivation, where they fired into the desert for hours. It was afterward discovered that the Arabs had moved off the day before and were farther up the river, quite out of hearing distance of the wild fusillade. After that things had begun to clear up and our captain had gotten permission to leave, but had delayed a few hours to get the India mail which came in the steamer that had brought us up the Gulf.

The next morning we came up from our staterooms into the sharp clear air of a February morning. A piercing wind was blowing in our faces but when we had pulled down our caps and climbed to the level of the bridge, we looked out over a flat desolate landscape, its meagre details standing out sharply in the crystal atmosphere. We were passing through a country as flat as a board, through which the muddy Tigris wound between sharp clay banks, two or three feet high. Here and there, in charge of slender Arab boys, a flock of sheep, mottled and blotched and spotted with black, brown, and white in amazing combinations, were to be seen grazing on patches of dry grass. There were reedy marshlands from which flocks of ducks rose at the sound of the steamer. And finally a little village of reed huts, rendered pic-

turesque by a mud-walled corral on one side, guarded by a dilapidated tower, completed the landscape.

Our steamer was specially built for this Tigris River traffic and was the first stern-wheeler to appear in these waters. But her first appearance was far from favourable, and though the name on her bow was *Julnar* she came to be known as the *Jonah*. She carried a considerable weight of cargo in the broad, shallow hold and in two barges lashed to the sides. She had accommodation for about a dozen cabin passengers, which was placed well forward, in the shape of a comfortable deckhouse of which the roof made a spacious promenade. The engine room was amidships and another deckhouse aft served for the crew's quarters. The cook's galley was a little space on deck under the lee of the cabin. A large number of deck passengers, chiefly Arabs, were carried in the after part of the boat, wherever they could spread a mattress.

Around the bridge and engine room were strong plates of boiler iron, to protect the officers from shore attack. These men were all English, except the Scotch engineer, and there was not one that had not stood to wheel or speaking tube when rifles were cracking on the bank and bullets pinging against the useful boiler iron. The crew were Chaldeans, native Christians, from a village to the north of Mosul, which we were to visit later. These men of Tel Kaif have always been employed

in this service and have come to be a sort of hereditary guild that would deeply resent any deviation from the practice of employing them only. As a rule they make excellent servants and can often be trusted to an extent unusual among Oriental peoples.

The captain soon joined us on deck and pointed out a grove of palms some distance away on the starboard bow. Among the trees we could see a blue dome, which he told us was the tomb of Ezra. As we came forging our way up the winding stream to those stately trees and that ancient memorial of bygone days, its yellow bricks blending with the river clay, its bright blue tiles flashing back the eastern sun from dome and minaret, we realized that we had indeed reached the land of Babylonian and Persian, of Hebrew prophet and Arab poet.

All that day and the next we passed miserable little villages of reed huts, inhabited by the meanest of the Arab tribes. Abu Muhamed they are called, or the people of El Batihat, the swamp. They do a little cultivating, chiefly of dates, but their wealth is in their sheep, and they also earn a little money by digging the liquorice root which abounds on the banks of the river, where the diggers pile it up in big black stacks and leave it until the boats of the trading company pick it up. It remains unguarded, but perfectly safe, in a country where raiding and every sort of lawlessness is the rule; for the Arab may plunder and

slay, but he is no sneak thief and will not violate a cache.

In these riverside villages the dour, ill-kempt men gazed at us indifferently, while bare-legged, black-eyed women and children ran along the bank offering us fowls, eggs, truffles, curds, or salt, with shrill cries, haggling excitedly over every article. One old woman ran for miles bargaining over a lean and ragged cock, which she finally sold to a deck passenger for two piastres (eight cents). The bargain concluded she threw the cock aboard, the passenger at the same time throwing two coins on shore. These were promptly seized and examined, whereupon they proved to be quarter piastre pieces. Outwitted, the old hag burst into tears and ran along another mile or so, pleading pitifully until her much-amused customer relented and tossed her the rest of the money.

One day we passed a wing of Sheikh Abdi's tribe of nomadic Muntifik Arabs, that had been terrorizing Busrah. The size of these wandering tribes is tremendous, and when seen on the march with their flocks and herds, they present a front several miles long. These people on this occasion were even more spread out, and for a whole day we were not out of sight of herds of grazing camels, flocks of sheep, or groups of black tents. The camel is their most important domestic animal, occupying the same place that the ox does in the West. Camels live chiefly on dry brush and a very little grass when they can get it. As this fodder

The Village of Kut from the River, a *Goufa* in the Foreground

makes little enough milk they have to be kept in great numbers, in order to supply the tribe, which, during much of the year, lives on curds and dates. The latter are bought from the sedentary tribes in exchange for the male camels, which are used as pack animals, breeding stock only being kept by the nomads. Usually only old beasts are killed for food, or young colts whose dams' milk cannot be spared when water or pasturage is scarce.

The herds we saw were all composed of females with their ungainly little colts, that danced about making absurd leaps and bucks in their fright at the passing steamer. In the course of the day, we saw hundred of these beasts, and there must be thousands more belonging to the same tribe.

We stopped for several hours to take on coal at the large village of Kut. Here a Turkish official, conspicuous in European dress and fez, came aboard to inspect our papers before we were permitted to land. He was paddled out in a *goufa*, the curious circular boat of this country, where wood is too scarce to use for boat-building. It is the "ark of bulrushes, pitched within and without with pitch," with which we are familiar in Holy Writ. Receiving permission we stepped ashore and threaded our way through the motley crowd on the bank into the narrow streets. Projecting from the upper stories of many of the burnt-brick houses were mysteriously screened bay-windows, reminding us of the secret romances of the *Arabian Nights*.

We passed into a dusky arched bazaar. Here by the door were freshly slaughtered sheep and near by charcoal braziers where a choice morsel may be broiled and tasted before the whole quarter is bought. There the next range of stalls belonged to the green-grocers, who display dates, cucumbers, rice, onions, lentils, and the less interesting but more evident garlic. Beyond, in niches on either side of the way, under the same arched roof were the tobacconists. We stopped to watch a boy preparing a bundle of paper tubes which we recognized as empty cigarettes. These he tied together and, setting them on a board, filled them by pouring finely chopped tobacco into their upturned ends and shaking it down. The Arab rolls his cigarette before he fills it, an operation which makes it possible to fill several hundred at once.

Passing through the village we came to an orchard of palm-trees where we found a youngster playing beside an irrigating ditch with a tiny waterwheel of twigs. His fathers had faced the water supply problem every day of their lives and it is not strange that their youthful successor should ponder over the same question in his idle moments among the rustling palms.

Before we reached our destination we made another stop amid far different scenes. On a neck of land where the Tigris makes a great bend stood once the ancient city of Ctesiphon, capital of the Sassanian rulers of Persia. Standing today amidst the desolation of shapeless mounds is a single

Ruins of the Palace of Chosroes at Ctesiphon

building of enormous size, the palace of Chosroes, built in the year 550 A.D. The walls and vaulted roof of the great hall still remain standing, and the front wall of the south wing. The appearance of the great ruin is very strange, quite different from any other ruin in this part of the East. On the left is the huge curtain of the wing, a brick wall so thick that it stands alone to a height of over a hundred feet. It is pierced by a single arched doorway of magnificent proportions, but dwarfed by the vastness of the whole building, and the whole face of the brickwork is further varied by a number of very shallow niches marked by engaged columns.

To the right is the great hall, its south wall forming an angle with that end of the wing. Across its width stretches the largest vaulted roof in the world, a lofty ovoid barrel vault, spanning a hall eighty-six feet wide. Its proportions are excellent, for though its height, ninety-five feet, is only slightly greater than the span, so perfect is the curve that it appears far greater. The whole front of this great hall is open and apparently never was closed by anything more permanent than a tremendous tapestry that measured, according to the Arab historian Tabari, sixty by seventy cubits. It was ornamented with a design representing a garden in which the ground was of gold, the paths of silver, the meadows emeralds, the streams pearls, and the trees, flowers, and fruits, diamonds and other stones. The back is

closed by a massive brick wall pierced only by a doorway and two windows.

The Sassanian dynasty, one of the members of which built this palace, was founded in the third century after Christ by a Persian prince, Ardashir, who succeeded in sweeping away the last remnant of the Parthian power. His capital, so far as he had any, was in Persia, but his successors found that a Mesopotamian capital was necessary as a base from which to carry on their constant wars with the Roman-Byzantine Empire. The chief city in the Tigris valley was then the Greek city state of Seleucia, named for Alexander's successor in this region, Seleucus Nicator; its ruined walls are still to be seen opposite Ctesiphon. Hither Sapor I. brought the stuffed skin of the Emperor Valerian, whom he had taken in battle in the year 260 A.D., and set it up in his palace. This city served as a base for Sapor II. in his campaigns against the Roman fortresses in the Tigris valley in 360. To it he retreated when the Emperor Julian defeated him, and there he would have been taken prisoner had not the pagan priests of the apostate Emperor found the sacrifices unfavourable for an attack. Those omens caused the downfall of Roman power in the East, for they persuaded Julian to leave the terrified Sapor and cross the Tigris. There he met an army of mountaineers, hastily gathered together to relieve Seleucia, and was killed in the battle that ensued. He was a strong man but was born out of his time to the heritage of a fast

Door in the Wall that Once Fronted the Left Wing of the Palace at Ctesiphon

decaying empire. He was succeeded by the weakling Jovian, who retired to Asia Minor leaving Sapor in undisputed control of the East.

He was succeeded by a strong line of powerful princes. But we need concern ourselves only with Anushirvan the Just, Chosroes, who in 540 took Antioch in Syria and the neighbouring city of Seleucia on the Orontes, whose inhabitants he transported to the Tigris valley, to Seleucia of Mesopotamia. Here he settled them on the east bank of the river, founding the city we know today as Ctesiphon. This Chosroes proved himself a worthy successor of Sapor by carrying fire and sword into the marches of Rome. But his noblest work was the building of the great hall which the Arabs call today by the name Takht-i-Khesra, the throne of Chosroes.

The dynasty lasted only a century longer, however, for the great climatic change which had already affected the Persians was spreading farther and driving the Arabs out of the desert. The great tide of Mohammedan invasion swept over Ctesiphon into Persia, and carried away with it the boy king, Yazdegird, the last of the Sassanids. The historians of that day chronicle a vast plunder as the result of the conquest of the city and tell of the amazement created in the minds of all at the sight of the noble palace.

So impressed were the wild conquerors, newly emerged from the desert, that they did not deface the paintings on the walls of the hall, much to the dis-

gust of the historian who chronicles the fact and who assures us that this was most unusual for Mohammedans. But two centuries later the old building had a narrow escape from destruction at the hands of the Kalif Mansur, who wished to use its bricks to build his new city of Bagdad. He was an Arab, a race that have shown themselves the most determined iconoclasts throughout their history. But his Vizier, Khalid, was of a different stamp, for he was a Persian, a member of the powerful Barmecid family with which we are familiar through the *Arabian Nights*. He sought to dissuade his master from his barbarous intention, but in vain. However, his intercession proved to be needless, for the great mass of the ruin saved it, and the iconoclastic Kalif found his resources insufficient to accomplish his purpose. His experience was much like that of Saladin who sought to use the pyramids to build his citadel at Cairo, but succeeded only in stripping off the outer sheath.

In the days of the kalifs this place was the site of a group of cities called collectively Al-Madain, the Cities. Ctesiphon itself came to be called Al-Madinah-al-Atikah, the Old City, and was a centre of great importance. All that remains today is a dirty little mud village full of barking dogs and unhealthy children. But there is one relic of Arab days that deserves notice, the tomb of Salman the Persian, one of the Companions of the Prophet. It is in a compound surrounded by

a ruined wall and groves of palms. The inner court can be entered only by a massive gateway before which is the village square, the lounging place of a set of dirty natives and fanatical *mollahs*. A well is before the gate, supplied by a ditch from the Tigris, half a mile away. Men were filling waterskins carried by donkeys when we passed and entered the gate. As we did so a roar of voices rose in the square and a crowd gathered, almost instantly, to see what would happen to the infidels that dared attempt to enter so sacred a place. At our left was a pile of rubbish on which sat a beggar, and opposite, across the empty court, was the tomb-mosque, a low flat-roofed building with three large arched doorways. Above it rose the octagonal roof of the tomb itself, covered by a squat onion dome. I had only time to raise my camera and make a hasty snap-shot of the scene when we were turned back by an indignant priest who appeared from the shadow of some palms. Out we went again into the village square amid the hoots and laughter of the crowd.

We forthwith shook the dust of the village from our feet and in ten minutes had reached the river. We went by a desert road with no sign of vegetation on either side. But there were numbers of little grey tufted larks, and a pair of plover flew over our heads from the bank of an irrigating ditch. Beside the river we sat down in a pomegranate orchard on deep beds of fresh green grass and waited for our steamer, which had taken all

the afternoon to round a loop only a mile across at the neck which is the site of Chosroes' palace.

It was on the seventh morning that we were aroused from slumber by demands of "Pass! Pass!" We jumped up in our pajamas to face officials in blue and grey uniforms with astrakhan fezes, whom we soon discovered wanted our passports. These were examined, their numbers and our names taken, and police objection to our presence declared removed. We dressed in haste, gathered together our possessions, and stepped on deck. There before us lay the city of our dreams.

We lay beside the business section crowded with flat-roofed buildings with here and there the low domes of a caravanserai. Beyond were the serried windows of the custom-house and farther still the lofty domes of the serai, the government buildings. Rising here and there above the welter of houses, distinct against the sky, was an occasional brightly tiled minaret or a disconsolate but majestic palm-tree. Upon all was the unmistakable stamp of the happy-go-lucky indifference of the Orient: the minarets all leaned, sometimes at a most precarious angle; the domes bulged incontinently; the windows were patched with regard neither for beauty nor usefulness. We were anchored just below a bridge, a sagging plank roadway supported by battered hulks that did duty for pontoons. A tipsy-looking railing offered a doubtful protection to a surging crowd. Clad in the dusty brown and rusty black Arab

A Tigris Water Hoist at Work. The Leather Bags are Drawn up by Animals

robes they passed and repassed unceasingly to or from the western bank. This bank contrasts curiously with its neighbour. Instead of the crowded jumble of buildings each lost in the embrace of its neighbours there is a long row of picturesque, sprawling, flat-roofed dwelling-houses, terraced and balconied, topped by innumerable palms. Interspersed among the houses are high-walled gardens filled with these tall sentinels of every Eastern gateway, drawn up rank on rank as if to answer to some morning roll-call.

We found the custom-house had not yet opened for the day but that difficulty was overcome by the judicious use of a rupee. Our baggage was thrown into a *goufa* and we jumped into another and were paddled downstream a few hundred yards to our hotel. We landed at a hole in a brick wall which we found gave access to a flight of steps leading up to a paved, arboured terrace. From this we gained access to the building where we were received by mine host, one Fransu, a Chaldæan. He showed us to a room looking across the river and we had a chance to glance about our new quarters. The house is a typical dwelling of the better class. It is built around two courts, one for the service quarters and the other for the living and sleeping rooms. The first floor is very low and somewhat of the nature of a basement. The heavy walls are hung with rugs and the massive vaulted brick ceiling seems unneces-

sary. The rooms above present a strange contrast. They are light and airy with many windows and light hangings. Above are flat roofs with high parapets. This arrangement is made on account of the climate. In summer the thermometer regularly registers over 105 degrees at noon, and during the twenty-four hours a variation from 112 degrees to 120 degrees has been recorded in very hot weather. During the blazing noons the people live in their lower stories or *serdabs*, where the heavy brickwork keeps out the heat of the sun and the dark hangings rest the eye from the glare. At night the whole family sleeps on the roof where a brief respite is found and sleep under the brilliant stars is possible. In the winter months, however, the mercury often drops below the freezing point, though the sun usually sheds a balmy warmth at noon. During this season the upper rooms, more cheerful than the *serdabs*, more protected than the roofs, are found most comfortable.

CHAPTER III

BAGDAD, CITY OF THE KALIFS

THERE are certain names of cities that are endowed with a rare poetic feeling that never fails to stir romantic sensations in our breasts. Whether it is by reason of the musical quality of their syllables, or merely the associations that have grouped around them in nursery tales or familiar poems, I hesitate to say. But it is certainly true that however tender the romance, however beautiful the poem, there are certain names so full of glamour and music that they cannot fail to add to its fascination. Such a name is Mandalay, which I think would live for us with its sunshine, and its palm-trees, and its tinkly temple bells, even if Kipling had not used it to embellish one of his most popular poems. Golconda never fails to suggest great store of mysteriously gotten wealth, and Ispahan shall never cease to be a name full of the scent of the rose and the music of dancing-girls. Samarcand is a name of similar significance and even Astrakhan has not become too common to call up visions of Tartar Khans. But one of the most familiar of

these names, one that is most intimately associated with mystic legend, is that of Bagdad. Such a mass of fable surrounds this name that it seems almost impossible that such a place should exist in fact. Like Xanadu it seems an enchanted place, situated upon the banks of a fairy river, that appears on earth only long enough to lave the palace walls. We think of it as the home of one man, Harun-al-Rashid. Its *raison d'être* to most of us is a group of tales, in which lamps, and jars, and carpets, play parts that were never intended for such articles to play.

Such at least was my early impression of the city of the kalifs, and it was with visions of the *Arabian Nights* that I set out to wander in the streets of Bagdad.

Of the ancient history of the towns that preceded Bagdad upon the same site we know practically nothing. Babylonian bricks have been discovered far beneath the level of the modern city, and in the days of Chosroes there was a market town of some local importance in the same place. But Bagdad itself was founded in the eighth century of our era by Mansur, who made it his capital, assuming to himself the dignity of Kalif, the successor of the Prophet, and head of the religion of Islam.

It will be remembered that Mohammed provided that he should be succeeded by a duly elected Kalif from the tribe of the Koreish, the hitherto unimportant tribe from which the quondam camel

driver sprang. The first selections were made from his companions, or disciples, and lived in the holy city of Mecca until two of them, Omar and Ali, disputed the succession. The former found his support in Syria, where he practically had made his home in Damascus. Thence he conducted military operations against his rival, whose supporters were the people of Mesopotamia. There Omar succeeded in overthrowing Ali, whence the latter fled to Persia, where he set up to be the lawful successor of the Prophet with the title of Imam, which he handed down to his descendants by Fatimah, daughter of Mohammed himself. He was succeeded by eleven Imams who are the chief saints, with Ali, of the Shia sect which now comprises practically all the Persians.

Omar made Damascus his capital, and founded there the hereditary Omayyad Kalifate. His followers formed the Sunni sect, which is the orthodox sect of Islam, and includes most of the Arabs, the Turks, and the Moslems of India and China. The Omayyads were twelve in number and ruled most of the Moslem world for a century, spreading their empire across North Africa to Spain. The last of them was overthrown by the Abbasid Mansur, who established his dynasty in his new city of Bagdad. This dynasty was essentially Asiatic and the Western conquests gradually fell away. First an Omayyad set up an independent Kalifate in Spain, with Cordova as his capital, and a century later Egypt became the centre

of another dynasty, the Fatimids of Cairo, and Syria soon fell to their possession. But the Abbasids retained, nevertheless, a very large empire, stretching from Syria and western Asia Minor to Central Asia, the Afghan mountains, and the western frontiers of India. For five centuries they ruled with Bagdad as their capital for all but a few decades, when the royal residence was moved up the Tigris a short distance to Samarra. During all that period they had no serious enemies except the Byzantine emperors, with whom they were at constant war. Their overthrow was finally accomplished by the Mongols under Hulagu Khan, who took Bagdad in 1258. In the sack that followed, the last of the line was killed, and the city was reduced for a time almost to a heap of ruins.

In the sixteenth century Bagdad was taken by the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, ally of the Emperor Charles V., who marched eastward after his unsuccessful siege of Vienna and had himself proclaimed Kalif in the city of the Abassids. From him the Sultan of Turkey has claimed the lawful succession to the Kalifate, and is recognized today as the successor of the Prophet by the orthodox, or Sunni, Moslems. This is in direct opposition to the provision of Mohammed himself that none but a member of the tribe of Koreish might succeed him, which fact furnishes the Shias with their reason for denying the authority of the Sultan. The Sunnis

A Riverside View in Bagdad

overcome this difficulty with characteristic Oriental sophistry.

The model of Bagdad was the older Persian capital Ctesiphon, situated only a few miles away. Doubtless also most of the builders employed by Mansur were Persians, for his desert Arabs were not versed in that art. Persian influence was conspicuous from the first, and the chief advisers of the Abbasids were all Persians until the time of Harun-al-Rashid. They belonged to the famous Barmecid family whose power began with Khalid, Mansur's Vizier, and ended with Jaffar, who used to accompany his master Harun in his incognito excursions through the streets of his capital, in search of adventures that are familiar to every child. Despite his romantic picturesqueness, Harun was a weakling and like many another Oriental tyrant his last days were marked with shocking cruelties, of which one of the worst was the slaughter of the whole Barmecid family at a feast that has become a proverb with us today.

This influence has made Bagdad essentially Persian in appearance. Especially is this true of the sacred edifices in which the domes and minarets are quite like those of Ispahan and Meshed, and bear no resemblance to the more familiar types of Western Islam to be seen at Cairo and Constantinople. This is true despite the fact that of Mansur's original "Round City" no vestige remains above ground, and of buildings that date back to the days of the Abbasids we have but few.

The modern city is situated below it, mainly on the east bank while the older city was on the west. The western quarter is small and almost entirely Shia, a great stopping-place for the thousands of Persian pilgrims that pass through every year on their way to and from their sacred city of Kerbela. There are also many permanent Persian residents whose chief business is with the pilgrims, and who look after the graves of their seventh and ninth Imams which are just outside the city at Kazimein.

The east bank is essentially Arab and contains the principal bazaars, the great mosque, and all the Sunni mosques and tombs. This quarter originally grew up around the palaces of some of the later kalifs and was surrounded by a semicircular wall. This is now practically in ruins, being but a series of mounds with a depression where the moat was. A few gates remain that date from the days of the Kalifate, but others have been built in Turkish times. Of interest to the antiquary are two relics of the Kalif Mustansir dating from 1233 and 1236. The first of these was originally a college and is now used as a custom-house; the latter is a minaret in an outlying part of the city, which is in a most unfortunate state of disrepair. Even older is the Khan Orthma which dates from the twelfth century and contains some beautiful carvings. These buildings, built for strength, were all of brick laid in mortar of the best possible quality, but used sparingly because of its scarcity.

There are many ruined mosques and tombs in and about the city. These are generally octagonal in shape, and roofed with shallow domes set on squinch arches. The latter however are often covered with a dome resembling a pineapple, composed of a series of alveolate niches, or squinches, set in converging courses, one above the other. The best example of this is the reputed tomb of Sitt Zobeida, wife of Harun-al-Rashid, situated near West Bagdad.

But the most interesting thing to the casual visitor is the street life which is to be observed most easily in the bazaars or market-places. Like those of Cairo and Constantinople these are the main streets of the business section, covered with a vaulted roof, formed generally of squinch arches, with shops bordering on either side, arranged like the chapels on either side of the nave of a Gothic cathedral. Light is furnished only by occasional openings in the vaulting, and so the scene is always dim, but often rendered beautiful by long sunbeams, that come in at a sharp angle through the little windows and lie diagonally across the passage. The best way to describe these busy marts is to ask the reader to come with me for a stroll through the city and point them out as we go along.

We step out of the door of the Tigris Hotel and turn to the left in the crowded street. Look out for those donkeys, they will run over you rough-shod if you do not! Look at them as they go by.

Big white fellows they are as strong as a horse. Notice the blue beads that they wear around their necks to avert the evil eye, and the embroidered halters hung with charms against spavin. They are carrying bricks to be used in rebuilding these dilapidated houses, for now you can see that the front walls of all the buildings for a hundred yards have been torn down. This was done by Nazim Pasha when he was Vali, pursuant to a plan he had formed to build a splendid boulevard through the heart of the city. Unfortunately he chose a line through the gardens of the British residency, and set his engineers to undermine the wall. The resident protested and offered to co-operate on another route, but in vain. So he remembered how Wellington placed a British sentry on the Pont d'Iéna in Paris when Blücher wished to blow up that offensively named structure, and went and did likewise. When the road builders saw the scarlet clad sepoy on the wall they soon ceased undermining it, for though the governor-general might have the right to undermine a wall, serious complications might follow the knocking down of a British sentry. So the boulevard building was held up and left only a few ugly scars.

You have heard of Nazim Pasha before as the commander-in-chief of the Turkish army in the Balkan War, who was assassinated at the very height of his usefulness. Although progressive he was not extremely radical like the Salonica committee, and when that body came into power

they sent him to this remote province to get rid of him, for Bagdad is at least three weeks' journey from the capital. But Nazim was not to be repressed. He cleaned out his vilayet, and in six months it was the best governed and quietest province in the Empire. This was, in the eyes of the Porte, adding insult to injury. They recalled Nazim in disgrace and secretly plotted to assassinate him on the way back. He got wind of the plot, however, and escaped incognito to Persia and made his way northward to Russian Armenia, where he worked with a pick and shovel for a living. A year passed, the Young Turk cabinet was discredited, and the grand-vizierate was offered to Kiamil Pasha. News of the change reached Nazim in his exile and he made his way to the port of Batum, where he took service as a coal-heaver on a Russian steamer. Arriving at Constantinople he promptly deserted, appeared at a friend's house, where he borrowed a general's uniform, and then made his way to the Sublime Porte. Here Kiamil immediately made him Minister of War. Only a few months later Europe was disgusted at the wanton assassination in his own office of the strongest character and finest general the Turks possessed, by the arch-devil of the Committee of Union and Progress, that notorious institution that belies its name in its every act.

But we are getting on rapidly. These shops on either side are kept by Jews, that by a firm of

Parsees from Bombay. The shop with the green-uniformed officers standing before the door is the government dispensary, another mark of Nazim's rule. Now we are coming into the old business section. See that whitewashed building with a balcony all around the second story? It is a typical coffee house where many of the prominent merchants gather. Let us pause here a moment and notice some of the passers-by.

This tall sharp-faced man is a wealthy rug-merchant. Notice his flowing cloak made of softest camel's wool with a beautiful silky lustre. His vest and belted robe, worn under the cloak reaching to the ankles, are of fine grey broadcloth. His green turban proclaims him a descendant of the Prophet. The man beside him is a *mollah* or priest. His undergarments are of the same soft grey as his companion's, but his cloak is harsher in appearance. As he brushes by, you can see it is of very tightly twisted, closely woven camel's hair without the gold embroidery the other shows. His turban is pure white, the priestly colour.

These other men passing now are of a poorer class. Their cloaks are less handsome, made of wool or goat's hair dyed in various shades of brown or striped brown and white. Their undergarments are of brightly coloured cotton cloth. Instead of the aristocratic turban they wear a kerchief of cotton folded diagonally and held in place on the head by a double circlet of woollen yarn.

See that group of dirty shabby men in baggy

The Tomb of Sheikh Omar, near One of the East Gates of Bagdad

trousers, felt hats, and flapping vests of the same material? They are *hamals*, the burden-bearers of the bazaars. They come from the hills north of the desert or from Persia and are of Kurdish race. They can carry enormous weights on their backs. There goes one now with a load of firewood. Yes, it is a man! Look under the load and you will find him.

Notice the man in the tall black felt hat with a black scarf around it. He is a Persian merchant and wears under his cloak, as you see, a jacket and baggy trousers. He is a very jolly sort and exchanges much banter with his friends in the balcony.

There is still much of interest awaiting us. Around the corner we enter a bazaar. Most of the Bagdad bazaars are of this type. The narrow street is covered by a vaulted roof. On either side are stalls in which the vender sits cross-legged behind his wares, which are displayed on the floor before him, or hung on the hinged shutters that close his shop at night. Each trade has a bazaar in a street or group of streets of its own.

Come this way and let us stroll down the clothing market. Everything is serene and quiet. Neatly folded cloaks are displayed upon either side. Gaily coloured kerchiefs hang upon open shutters; Manchester piece goods are temptingly unrolled before the unwary wanderer. Here a group of men are embroidering with gold and silver

patterns the brilliant native-silk cloaks worn by the women; there a man is cutting and sewing lambskins for the military fezes. Sober, well-dressed customers sit, puffing at water-pipe or cigarette, discussing bargains with most indifferent-looking merchants.

But come into this bazaar around the corner and you will see a very different thing. Here are the green-grocers and sweetmeat sellers. I have to shout it into your ear, such a din comes from every side. Roughly clad men, gesticulating wildly, are explaining the utter worthlessness of the dates they wish to buy. Old hags, neglectful of their veils, are haggling excitedly over bunches of garlic or huge cucumbers. Yonder a pitifully inadequate boy is striving manfully to restrain a kicking, squealing donkey who has all but got his muzzle into a basket of grain. Every stall is crowded and every individual is shouting at the top of his lungs. The narrow street is filled with the surging mob. We try to fight our way through. We squeeze along slowly but manage it somehow. Suddenly we hear cries behind. A caravan is coming. Thirty or forty horses loaded with heavy projecting bales of tobacco swing casually through the throng at a fast walk, urged by sharp blows from their stalwart drivers. The crowd opens up like magic. Dodge that bale! How they do it I do not know. They pay no attention to the horses but go on bargaining furiously. It is like a ship passing through the sea. The water

opens in front and closes up behind and only a slight swirl marks the passing.

Come, let us get out of this! We pass through the shoemakers' bazaar between rows and rows of red slippers into the harness-makers' bazaar. Here are brilliant headstalls, uncomfortable looking saddles with brilliantly embroidered covers, stirrups, ropes, chains, bits, all the paraphernalia of the road.

Bang! Bang! What a noise! Where are we now? The place is full of acrid smoke. You cannot see for a moment. It is the coppersmiths' bazaar. Sitting on the ground on either hand, beside smoky charcoal fires, they keep banging away all day with hammers of every conceivable size and shape. They are swiftly, deftly shaping pots and pans, platters, trays, bowls, and narrow-necked water jars. One workman turns out the rough article and hands it to another who taps away at it, neatly covering it with rows of dents, scalloping the edge, or hammering out a rough design.

Now we will go out into the fresh air and get the smoke and dust out of our lungs. We get a carriage in front of the government building, a great shapeless pile around a big courtyard guarded by lazy-looking sentries. We drive through the north quarter of the city where many of the caravanserais are. Here is the arsenal, which was once the kalif's palace. Pause a moment and consider that from this very gateway

Harun-al-Rashid used to sally in disguise to try the temper of his people, and in one of those upper rooms the fair Zobeida wove the tales of the thousand and one nights.

Turn now and notice the dome patterned with gaudy tiles clinging to the cracks of which are many pigeons. It is the dome of the oldest mosque in Bagdad. At its door Harun used to stand and mix with the beggars. Before its pulpit the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent had himself made Kalif, thus ending the existence of Bagdad as the capital of Islam.

The north gate through which we pass is unbeautiful and unhistoric, but we drive on along the outer edge of the great fosse, the "Bagdad ditch," past recently arrived caravans, and stop to see an older gate on the east side. Like the ancient Greek, and more recent mediæval European fortified gateways, it is approached by a causeway exposing the unprotected right side of assailants to the walls. The tower thus reached gave access to a bridge across the fosse, and another gateway admitted within the walls. Inside this gate is a tomb, which I point out because it is typical of the Bagdad burial-places. The mortuary chamber is covered by a "pineapple dome" such as is often seen hereabout. Within a walled garden is a beautiful tiled minaret whence a muezzin calls to prayer five times a day, and calls in vain, I fear, for the city is not as large as it once was and there are no houses within hearing

distance. But such is the force of tradition in the East.

A few minutes more bring us to the mosque of Abdul Kadir. The main part of the building is covered by a huge low whitewashed dome, beside which in curious contrast is the most beautifully decorated dome in the Mohammedan world. It is covered with tiles making a design like a beautiful Persian rug, both in tasteful treatment and subdued colouring. The cylindrical wall below is similarly decorated. Below a ring of arabesques is the most exquisite tile-work in the world. The minarets are of almost equal beauty while the gardens about the mosque are among the most lovely in Bagdad. This shrine is a great resort for pilgrims, especially from India where the Kadiriyeh dervishes, an order founded by Abdul Kadir himself, are very strong.

It was built soon after the death of the Sheikh in 1253, and so must have been quite new in the year of the Mongol invasion that witnessed the fall of the Abbasids. To this the present successor of Abdul Kadir, the Nakib as he is called, owes his pre-eminence in the religious world of Bagdad. The kalifs had jealously protected their religious hegemony lest rivals rise against them, but they had not had time to fear the successors of even so holy a man as Abdul Kadir, and so the Nakib had no great difficulty in stepping into their shoes and establishing no little local prestige. The present

Nakib is a quiet but progressive man, with a good influence.

Near the mosque is a *tekiyeh*, a place for the entertainment of pilgrims. Several broad courts are surrounded by two-storied arcades, that provide lodging for thousands of pilgrims. There are to be seen men of all the Moslem nations, washing at the fountain and walking in the shade of the gardens. This is one of the great meeting-places of Islam, where all races and peoples that follow the Prophet come together and realize the widespread and singular unity of their religion. Pilgrimage is the great bond that unites all Moslems, whether they dwell by the holy cities in Hejaz, in the confines of Europe, or in distant Hindustan, or still more remote China.

From this great shrine it is only a short drive to the American consulate where we may dismiss our carriage and pay our respects to the consul. Mr. Sauer occupied that position at the time of our visit, and showed us the kindest hospitality. He and the vice-consul, Mr. Levack, by their assistance, practically made our journey from Bagdad possible.

The consulate is in the southern part of the city, not far from the river. Nearby is the British residency where we were received by the acting resident, Major Scott, to whom we were provided with letters. This official, though called a resident, is really only a consul. He owes his title to the fact that he is under the India office, and not the

The Tomb Mosque of Sheikh Abdul Kadir, Showing One of the Finest Domes in the Moslem World

foreign office, and so ranks as a representative in a native state in which the government of India claims a sphere of influence. He further differs from a consular officer in having a guard of thirty Sikhs, and a little gunboat on the river. This arrangement dates from 1838, when a military expedition was sent up the river to establish, once for all, the right of Britons to carry on trade in Bagdad. The first big company to enter into trade there was that of Messrs. Lynch, for whom England wrested from Turkey the right to navigate the Tigris, a right which they still exercise. It is largely in evidence of this right that the caller at the residency is saluted by a trim, bearded sepoy as he enters the gate.

The spacious buildings and beautiful gardens of the residency are the centre of the European colony in the city. A short time ago this comprised only a few merchants and the consuls of the great Powers. But today there are several engineers connected with the irrigation works, started under the direction of Sir William Willcocks, all of whom are English, and a considerable number of German and other Continental engineers engaged on the Bagdad Railway. The chief engineer was our fellow-guest at the Tigris Hotel, and from him we learned that there were then (1913) eighty kilometres in process of construction. When we asked to see the work, we were courteously but firmly refused.

The concession for this railway was considered

a triumph of German diplomacy. The line already existing in 1909 from the Bosphorus to Boulgour, and requiring only a short addition to bring it to the Mediterranean at Mersina, was the chief claim of Germany for a sphere of influence in Anatolia. England's weakness in permitting this German interest to be pushed forward to Bagdad, the very centre of the British sphere, is attributable only to the policy of conciliation followed by the Foreign Office in all the Near Eastern questions, not only in 1910–1911 when this concession was granted, but later also, when Mr. Shuster was driven out of Persia. It may be unnecessary to note that the port of Mersina has been surrendered to Germany upon a long lease—a very dangerous precedent. The permanent way between this port and the important Syrian centre of Aleppo will soon be completed. The railways south of this city are chiefly owned in France and have been built by French companies, while that nation also claims Syria as her sphere of influence; it is therefore at Aleppo that German and French interests may be expected to clash.

From this point the Bagdad Railway turns eastward and already trains are running to the Euphrates. The line is to be continued to Mosul and then southward, down the Tigris valley to Bagdad. It was at first announced that the concession for a line from Bagdad to Busrah had been guaranteed to the English, and it was hinted that the Lynch interests would undertake the work.

But it has recently become known that such a concession has been given to Germany and that the Bagdad Railway will, in course of time, be continued to the Gulf. The loss to the Lynch interests alone caused by such a railway will be very great; and these interests are the chief British claim to commercial preponderance in Mesopotamia. Strategically Bagdad has always been regarded as an outpost of the Indian Empire. The building of the Bagdad Railway will practically put it in the hands of Germany, and will shorten the time to India by several days, so that in the event of a conflict between the Powers in the East—by no means impossible in the light of the present imbroglio in Europe—a Continental nation controlling the Bagdad Railway would be able to attack the British Empire in its most vulnerable spot before measures could be taken for adequate defence.

Furthermore Russia now controls the passes on the Persian frontier north of Bagdad and, it cannot be denied, is looking greedily on the Tigris-Euphrates valley. The old spectre of a Muscovite invasion of India has not yet disappeared, and here again the present cabinet has departed from the "stand back and hands off" policy of its predecessors. All of which plainly suggests that they feel that England has all the colonial responsibility that she can bear, and that on account of the dangerous situation in Europe, they can do no more to check the colonial expansion of the

other Powers. We may yet see either Germany or Russia on the Persian Gulf, possibly both.

These subjects were the talk of Bagdad at the time of our visit, and it need hardly be said that the Anglo-Saxon community, who had been practically the only foreign element, resented the German invasion and felt rather bitterly toward their government for permitting it. Nevertheless they were accustomed to meet the Teutons on entirely cordial terms. There are two European clubs now, however, the old English club which admits no Continentals, and the somewhat less exclusive German and French club.

A short distance outside of West Bagdad—the Shia quarter—is the suburb of Kazimein. Here are the tombs and mosques of the seventh and ninth Imams, descendants of Ali and Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet. The Shia are the most fanatical Moslems and will permit no Christian to enter their shrines. But visitors may go out to the mosques, by the little train line that connects them with the city, and gaze from afar upon the gilded domes and minarets, the exquisite tile-work of the gateways, and the doors of beaten silver. The wealth of this shrine is nothing short of marvellous and is due to the fact that the Shias are devoted pilgrims and are wont to make large gifts to their chief shrines. Kazimein is especially fortunate in being not only very near Persia, but also on the great pilgrim route to Kerbela, the old centre of the sect and site of some of its most

sacred tombs, as well as the route to Mecca, the supreme Moslem pilgrimage. But it is not safe for a Westerner to linger long before the great shrines, lest he rouse the fanaticism of the worshippers and suffer the ignominy of being hustled rudely away. The best place from which to view the shrine is from the roof of one of the neighbouring tombs, as that of the Indian prince, Sir Ikbal ed Douleh, brother to the late King of Oudh. The *mollah* in charge is a kindly soul and ever ready to dispense hospitality to a stranger, especially if he be a fellow-subject of his late lamented master.

Kazimein, though a Shia shrine, really owes its sanctity to having been the burial-place of Ibn Hanbal, founder of the last of the four orthodox Sunni sects. His tomb however has long since disappeared. Across the river stands the tomb of another of this line of teachers, Abu Hanifah, founder of the first of the four sects. Its beautiful old tiled dome, in the midst of the picturesque village of Muazzam, is doubtless the oldest of all the ruins about Bagdad, for its occupant was a Christian convert who aided Mansur in the building of the original Moslem city.

The whole region about this tomb and those of Kazimein is a vast cemetery, covered with graves and scattered stones, sad reminders of past greatness, for here were the palaces of the earliest and greatest of the Abbasid kalifs.

CHAPTER IV

JOURNEYING TO BABYLON

IT was not that we had had enough of Bagdad. The fascination of that romantic city never palled. The least spoiled city in Turkey, the soul, not only of Irak, but of Iran and Arabia, we found it ever alive with romance, kaleidoscopic with strange sights, teeming with men of all descriptions, desert dwellers and city dwellers, mountaineers and plainsmen. But we wished to exchange these mediæval scenes for a glimpse into the shimmering dawn of history, bright with the hopes of surging peoples, resonant with strange tongues, and fresh with the dew of unquestioned tradition. It was for this that we decided to leave the noisy bazaars to cross the desert silences and sit down by the waters of Babylon.

It seemed prosaic to make this journey in a post-carriage. We sent our servant with the requisite number of Turkish *liras* to procure a ticket and such oranges and dates and other things as we should require for sustenance on the road. The ticket began to dispel our illusions about the prosaic character of the ride. It was a slip of

paper, four inches square, bearing at the top a rough woodcut representing an old-fashioned stage-coach; below it was filled in with flowing Arabic characters setting forth our names, our destination, and the date. Our last illusion was dispelled when we were confronted at the consulate with a trim, blue-uniformed *zaptieh*, his rifle slung over his shoulder, his hand raised to salute, who was to accompany us to guard us from the perils of the road.

The carriages leave bright and early so as not to reach their destination after dark when robbers are abroad. It was not yet four o'clock when we arose and jumped into the warmest clothes we had. In the courtyard a flickering lantern cast fantastic shadows on the yellow brick walls. Above we caught a glimpse of sharply glittering stars. A Kurdish coolie was produced from somewhere and loaded with kit-bag and tiffin basket, containing the odds and ends of wayfarers. Mustafa, the cook's boy, seized the lantern and led us through the outer courtyard toward the street. Yusef, the porter, had to be aroused to unlock the heavy door and let us out. Not contented with this service he too snatched up his lantern and set out to accompany us. But Mustafa had no intention of dividing his backsheesh with a porter. A shrill discussion ensued in which our servant joined and, worsted, Yusef returned to his blankets in the niche within the door.

That was a weird walk through the deserted

streets. At first the starlight revealed the scene beyond the uncertain flashes from the swinging lantern. Soon projecting upper storeys shut out all but a narrow strip of sky. The lantern light flashed on massive doors and barred windows. We entered the bazaar. The vaulted roof shut out the sky; the darkness was oppressive. Our voices re-echoed down the empty passage as in a tomb. A dog, roused by our footsteps, leapt up with a shrill bark and faced us, his hair bristling, his teeth showing white against the backward curled lips. The light flashed from the eyes of a group of his fellows; some rose barking fiercely; others slunk away from the light. The alarm spread and in a moment the whole street was filled with a turmoil of barking. All the dogs in the neighbourhood, wakened by the noise, joined in, half in anger, half in fear. Rays of light were reflected far ahead from pairs of eyes. Stark forms with bristling backs and gleaming teeth backed against the wall as we passed. If any stood in our way he was quickly put to rout by Mustafa's cane and fled howling, his tail between his legs. As we passed they quieted down, we turned into other streets, and all was silent again. Only occasionally a sinewy brute leaped to his feet or a pair of wide eyes glowed at us from the edge of the way.

As we made our last turn before reaching the bridge a gleam of light flashed as from metal; we heard the click of spurs, and two officers of the watch passed with a solemn greeting. A little

group of coolies, slouching, deep-chested, trotted by without turning their heads. We stepped on the rickety bridge of boats, following the lantern carefully so as not to step through some hole in the planking. The Tigris swirled and gurgled beneath us; the starlight flashed on the water downstream; before us yawned blackly the entrance to the bazaars of West Bagdad.

Into this black hole we plunged and were greeted almost instantly by a furious crowd of white-fanged curs through which we made our way only after vigorous use had been made of Mustafa's cane. A couple of donkeys laden with brushwood followed by a cursing hag brushed by. The lantern light revealed a huddled coolie asleep on a pile of rubbish. The rickety roof of poles lay like a gridiron against the sky. Then we left the bazaars behind and found ourselves among the khans whither the caravans come. The air was full of the smell of stables and the musty odour of camels. A group of laden mules were standing before an arched doorway. In the darkness we heard the creak and thud followed by stamping which means a load has been lifted upon the saddle. We cringed against a wall in a litter of straw to let pass a caravan of shouldering, jostling camels. A curious brute thrust his ugly scowling countenance into the lantern light, blinking stupidly into our faces. "Daughter of wickedness! Mother of asses!" shrilled a voice through the night. The camels passed on. The air was

sharp with the chill that comes before the dawn. The stars were growing dull. So we came at last to the khan from which the *arabanas*, the post-carriages, start.

The bustle of departure over, we banged away in our narrow rattle-trap of a stage-coach, collars turned up, hands stuffed in pockets, shivering in the still cold of the winter morning. We reared over the high banks of irrigating ditches, bumped against deserted graves, and entered upon the flat brown clay desert. Behind us the sun rose over the minarets and domes of the city. The brilliant sky was reflected in a marsh left by last year's floods. The chains jingled merrily as we rattled on. A telegraph line lay on our right, now near, now far, as the track we followed wandered capriciously. Around us stretched the desert.

At first we found it rather lonely, this vast flat stretch of sun-baked clay. We overtook a few little groups of laden donkeys, and the caravan of camels that had passed us in the streets, but we met only a knot of black-clad women, each staggering beneath an enormous load of brush-wood, the bitter, prickly camel thorn, sole product of the unirrigated wastes.

But as the sun rose higher and the dry soil gave back its heat the mirage began to appear, first on the horizon, then nearer like a flood of crystal water. As the day went on, we began to encounter those who went towards Bagdad from beyond the Euphrates. We passed a ruined castle

and climbed clumsily over the mound that marks an old canal. There before us was a throng of other wayfarers, Persian pilgrims returning from a visit to the shrines of Kerbela. Strong, bearded men strode sturdily along beside heavily laden mules or rode sideways on tiny donkeys. Women and children swayed back and forth in a sort of cradle on the backs of animals or were hidden away in curtained boxes slung on each side of a pack-saddle. The men showed the effects of weariness, for theirs had been a long journey. But they were dogged and the leaders among them greeted us cheerfully enough. They were a large company straggling for several furlongs along the desert track, simple folk who made their pilgrimage in toil and suffering, sacrificing wonted comforts and using the savings of years for the expenses of the road. They were town dwellers from the shores of the Caspian or north-central Persia, unaccustomed to hardship. At home they had lived by cultivating a little garden or vineyard or by doing a little quiet trading in the bazaars of their native town. The women had lived aways in the jealously guarded secrecy of their apartments, rarely appearing on the street. And here they were setting out again to brave the perils of a road beset with hostile tribes, barred by lofty mountain passes. Such is the fanatical power of the religion which they profess. Not a few must perish by the road, some will lose their animals and have to leave their simple loads behind and

trudge on destitute. "All is in the hands of Allah! Allamdulillah! Praise be to God!"

Behind the pilgrims were a number of camels, in irregular groups, plodding along in awkward indifference. Somewhere in each group was a man or boy striding along with his staff across his shoulders or perched high up on the hump of one of the beasts. But the leaders of the caravan rode in stately dignity each upon a tiny ass before a group of forty or fifty towering, heavily laden camels. The donkeys pattered along on dainty feet with drooping heads and swishing tails. The camels swaying from side to side swung their huge padded feet in ungainly fashion, deliberately, as though pausing after each step. They made a picture of patient submission for they seemed to have got it into their undulating heads that the donkey was to be followed, so follow him they did, albeit protestingly.

When we had passed the last group of these burden-bearers, spread out right and left on each side, grumbling at having to make way for us, when the last stragglers from the pilgrim caravan had given up their quest of alms and followed their brethren, this is the tale that was told us by Thomas ibn Shamu, our servant:

"Sahib! This matter happened to a Sheikh of the desert, a Bedouin, not like the people of the city but a dweller in tents, filthy, and a Moslem." Thomas was a Chaldæan of Bagdad and feared as much as he despised the dwellers in the desert.

A Caravan of Persian Pilgrims on the Way to Kerbela

"This man was about to die and he called his animals about him, asking them to forgive what wrongs he had done them. His mare looked tearfully upon her master and said she had nought to forgive; she had had milk from the camels and water provided for her on long marches in the desert; why should the master ask her forgiveness?

"The greyhound said he had always had sufficient water to drink and a warm place to sleep, so he would gladly forgive his master if he had had to go hungry at times and been tied up when he wished to roam abroad.

"The ass said with pity in his voice that he had been beaten and ill fed and driven by women but, as his master was dying, he would forgive all.

"Then came the camel, growling and groaning and gurgling in his throat. Glaring bitterly at his master he said: 'You have made me go hungry and thirsty; you have sent children to strike me in the face when I was restless and wished to walk about; you have burdened me with an ill-made saddle that galled my back; you have made me carry for all that are in your tent. All these things I forgive, since you are dying. One thing I will not forgive, that is that you have made me walk behind a donkey."

Caravan after caravan we passed, more pilgrims and more camels; some we overtook and some we met. Strange effects were often caused by the mirage. A caravan went by. A lake appeared before them. They seemed to enter it and were

reflected in it. The camels grew taller and thinner in the shimmering heat until, tremendously lengthened and utterly unstable, they disappeared in the distant haze. In another quarter the lake reflected a white building, surrounded by a forest of palms, giving an impression of comfortable shade. We drove on, the lake receded, dwindled; a band of pilgrims seemed to be walking in a marsh; then the mirage vanished and we saw clearly. We were driving into a squalid village beside a dried-up irrigating canal. Upon a mound stood three drooping, draggled, dusty palms, all that was left of our lovely grove.

Here we stopped to change our mules. In the roadway before the khan sat a group of Arabs. A servant supplied them with little cups of tea from a rude samovar. "*Salaam aleikum.*" We saluted them and taking our places in the circle we were served in turn, we and our following. Someone in the dark doorway was thumping away on a drum. A boy came out of the khan beating a poor lame donkey covered with fly-infested sores. I turned to one of my neighbours:

"Is it not cruel for that boy to beat a lame ass in that way?"

"Effendim, it is the will of God!"

"But you do not allow horses or camels to be beaten thus."

"Effendim, the donkey is not like the horse nor yet like the camel. The reason is this. Upon a certain day the donkeys went before Allah and

complained that they were grievously beaten by men so that life was a greater burden than they could bear. Then said Allah: 'I cannot make men cease from beating you. It is no sin, neither does it cause them any great loss. But I will help you. I will give you so thick a hide that however much you are beaten you shall not suffer.'

"So," said my informant, "it is of no consequence if men beat an ass. So thick a skin did Allah give him that after he dies men use it in the making of drums and the donkey continues to be beaten after death."

Thump, thump, thump, thump, came the sound from the shadowed doorway.

Soon after leaving the village we overtook a throng of pilgrims trudging along on foot. They were the poorest of the poor, dwellers in reed huts from the great swamp. Yet they seemed the most cheerful of all the pilgrims. They whiled away the time with merry talk, flaunting their green and red banners overhead. The women were unveiled and walked with bare feet beside their lords, carrying the few necessities of their culinary art. Old men greeted us pleasantly. A mere slip of a girl with a baby in her arms cracked a joke at our expense, much to the amusement of her companions. Four or five hundred people they were, on this tramp of a thousand miles which they had undertaken to ensure their future happiness.

Journeying for the same purpose was another

caravan, that of a rich Persian family. The father, riding a handsome grey stallion, was in the lead, clad in sombre black, his beard stained red with henna. His sons came behind with a group of armed servants all superbly mounted. Not a woman was in sight. They were hidden away in *kejavehs* carefully curtained, carried two and two on the backs of mules. I wonder if ever these pale cramped women in their stuffy boxes wished to exchange their lot for that of their slender, sad-eyed sister who had tramped, barefooted, from the swamp.

That night we spent in the hospitable dwelling of an English engineer, representative of a well-known London firm. He was engaged in placing a huge barrage across the channel of the great river Euphrates. Long ago, in the dim past, this land-between-the-rivers was intersected by a network of canals, which made it the home for the dense population of Babylonian and Persian times. These waterways are marked today by long clay ridges, for so laden with silt are the rivers that the canals are rapidly silted up and have to be dug out afresh each year. For some reason, or more likely for many reasons, these canals were abandoned one by one until now even Kerbela and Babylon have no running water except in flood time. The barrage is a long series of arches each of which may be closed by a steel door. Its purpose is to hold back the river in the season of low water so that it will run freely into the canals to

the threatened cities. In flood times the gates will be opened so that the great mass of water which would carry a dam away may sweep by as though running under a bridge.

Four thousand years ago a civilization existed in this land which probably was old in the days of Noah. Somewhere in the buried past of the earth a prosperous race increased their prosperity by conducting the life-giving waters far and wide over the face of the land. They developed a tremendous culture, fostered literature, art, and science; their armies spread terror among their neighbours; the justice of their courts was unequalled; their wise men solved the problem of creation in a way that has come down to us today. But city after city has fallen as the waters ceased to flow and their places have become sun-scorched mounds. Only the greatest of them remains, whose people have cried in despair, "Give us water! Without water we perish!" The cry has been heard by an alien government and they in turn have called for help from a still more alien people. So this barrage was undertaken and even as I write the waters are beginning to flow again toward Babylon the great.

We resumed our journey carried like the pilgrims by the immemorial burden-bearer, the humble ass. Ridge after ridge of sun-baked clay we crossed, traversing the flat desert. Only one of the many large canals still contained any water and that only in stagnant pools. Once we passed

a group of mounds covered with sherds marking the spot where once a village stood. Only one miserable group of huts was still inhabited. There was no one but dogs and a ragged child to greet us, for men, women, and children were out caring for the sheep or toiling to raise water from the deep wells to irrigate the palm gardens and the slender crops of grass.

As the day wore on, the horizon became fringed with palms. There was no mirage, for the desert no longer gave back the slanting rays. My companion's donkey trotted ahead neighing pleadingly to the leader of our caravan who had been striding in advance all afternoon. Ceasing his weird desert melody the man took from his bosom a handful of dates which the pet received gratefully from his hand, immediately falling back with his companions. We found the palms separated into groves by half-ruined mud walls. A glossy long-tailed magpie leapt from palm-stump to toppling wall and examined us critically. A pair of crested hoopoes made note of our coming, then disappeared among the branches of a blossoming pomegranate. The lower limb of the sun touched the horizon. The pious leader of our caravan, having instructed his underlings, stepped from the path, and, his face toward the setting sun, his hands upon his breast, began to repeat the evening prayer.

We rode on to a village strongly surrounded by a mud wall capped with thorns. We followed a

A Tea-shop before a Village Inn on the Road to Babylon

flock of sheep through the gate and out again through the opposite wall. A winding path led down to the dry bed of the ancient canal where once ran a large part of the mighty Euphrates. The sheep were driven down, bleating, to a little hole where a slight moisture still remained. Behind them the last glow of the setting sun clothed the palms in splendour. A collapsed *goufa* lay in the sand of the watercourse, beside it a *belem* with seams gaping from dryness. The hand of drought lay upon all.

We found the dwelling of the German excavators among the palm-trees on the other bank. Our journey ended, we dismounted in the dusk while Ibrahim, the *zaptieh*, dinned against the door. A blue-clad guard flung open the portal and we were admitted into the courtyard. A flock of geese waddled importantly to meet us; a ruffled turkey cock complained truculently over an empty feed-pan; a flock of pigeons rose, flapping, to the roof. It seemed as though we had entered a Rhenish farmyard having left the sights and sounds of the desert far behind.

Sitting around the dinner table that evening we made the acquaintance of our new friends. They told us of their work and its results, of the discoveries they had made and the difficulties they had encountered. The conversation turned upon personal safety and the value of human life in this land of quickly roused passions.

"With us," said Herr Wetzel who sat at my

right, "if you kill a man you do not go to prison, you will not be killed. No, you must pay fifty *liras* to the family of the man; that is all.

"The son of one of our labourers killed a man. But, of course, a poor labourer had not fifty *liras* so they had to settle it by special arrangement.

"The boy was a shepherd and had a field of grass to feed his flock. Another shepherd who was too lazy to irrigate his own pasture came into this field one day and stole grass. It happened, however, that the other found it out and went and called his fellow a thieving sneak, an unprincipled wastrel, and other names of an undignified nature. This made the thief very angry, so he went into the field again and stole more grass. Once more the owner caught him. 'Again, son of Satan, child of Beelzebub! Surely I will send thee to join thy father!' and he shot him dead on the spot.

"Now his father was by the canal watering his donkey when someone of his neighbours came and said, 'Thy son hath slain his fellow.' Immediately the old man packed all his goods, his pots and his pans, upon his donkey, and fled to the next village.

"But when the murdered man's family heard of the crime they rushed to the murderer's house and tore from it every last remaining article of value; then they returned to their own place. After this exhibition of rage their anger cooled somewhat and the murderer's father returned to

his house but without his donkey. He knew that now they would harm neither himself nor his son because of the fifty *liras* which was their due. Truly the Arab is too shrewd to kill the goose that lays the golden egg.

"After a seemly interval the family of the murdered man came to demand their money. Over their narghilehs and cups of coffee the parties discussed this question.

" 'Surely our brave young man who feared neither wolves nor robbers and carried a great silver knife in his belt was worth four hundred *liras*!'

" 'Nay! Thy son was a rascal and not worth twenty *liras*. Moreover he stole my donkey!'

"Now the relatives did not know that the old schemer had but carried off the donkey to the next village; so they said:

" 'But thy donkey, we know, was an ugly brute and old and not worth two *liras!*'

" 'Nay, rather was he an animal of great beauty, pure white without a blemish, and scarcely five years of age. Surely he was of great value. But now that he has been stolen and knows me not, I will make a concession to you and value him at one hundred *liras*.'

"So they bargained over the donkey and then over the man and fixed upon his value less that of the donkey at last. The father must pay thirty *liras* to the murdered man's family.

" 'But I am a poor man and have nothing. Wherewithal shall I pay?'

" 'Truly we know thou didst receive six *mejids* for certain dates, last November.'

" 'But all this money is spent save two *metaliks* and a bad *piastre*, without which I cannot purchase salt for my son's sheep.'

"So it was arranged that payment should be made in kind. More bargaining ensued over this. Finally the relatives agreed to accept two sheep, a young ass, and ten *abas* to be made by relatives of the murderer who dealt in such goods.

"When the time for payment came these goods were brought together and turned over to the relatives. The animals were passable and duly accepted. But as for the *abas*—they were scarcely big enough for a three-year-old child.

" 'This is not according to the bargain. We cannot wear such *abas*.'

" 'Nay! but there was no word in the bargain requiring me to make *abas* for big men.'

"So the relatives were outwitted and the neighbours said, 'What a clever man!'

"We have a neighbour who is a rich man and keeps fifty *liras* always at hand. So the villagers know his gardeners will shoot and do not trespass in his gardens in the date season, for no one likes to get killed."

As we were preparing to leave the table there was a rustling in the verandah without, then a sound of scuffling and a voice resembling that of the common or back-fence variety of cat. But as we left the room we saw that these were no common

cats. Solemnly the aged, dignified, and very learned Herr Professor assured us that they were Babylonian cats. Not one or two but a score at least, black and tawny, striped and marbled, like ordinary cats, but each showing his royal race by his tail, which was laughably misshapen, crooked, and kinked, like the tail of a bulldog. This motley crew swarmed over the Professor, who fed them with pieces broken from one of the coarse unleavened loaves of native bread which he had brought from the table for the purpose. They climbed to his shoulders, clung to his coat, scuffled, and cuffed each other in the struggle for his favour.

"You have now seen one of the sights of Babylon," said the Professor. "We will show you others in the morning."

Beyond the palms and the deserted river bed is the city, a group of huge mounds from which the curious of another world have removed the dust and revealed the foundations. Here are endless mazes of walls, floors, and vaulted chambers, all built of bricks laid in asphalt. This is the land to which the people came when they said, "Let us go down into the plain and use bricks for stone and pitch for mortar."

Every brick in these enormous structures is stamped with the name and lineage of a king, the master builder. Down at the base of the mound, where the trenches of the excavators are filled with water like the wells of the village, are bricks bearing the name of Hammurabi and a date 2200

years before our era. Above them are many bricks bearing a more familiar name. A sloping roadway leads up to an imposing triple gate upon which the figures of bulls and griffins stand out in bold relief. Beyond the gate are the walls and floors of a palace; but the road slopes on upward to a higher level, and there also are the ruins of a palace, a palace built upon a palace. The name upon these bricks is that of Nebuchadnezzar. Somewhere among these walls was Daniel's window open toward Jerusalem; somewhere among these cryptic ruins was the burning fiery furnace.

Overlooking one part of the palace stands a gigantic sculptured lion, defiant over the prostrate body of a man. This great block of stone must have been a curiosity indeed in this land of clay where even a pebble is unheard of. Why it was brought here and how would certainly make an interesting story. It may have been a trophy brought to grace a Babylonian triumph; it may have been an offering from an Assyrian king to appease the god of Babylon for the removal of the capital to Nineveh. Be that as it may, the long journey down the Tigris valley and across the plains of Irak must have been an eventful one.

Down among the ruins of Nabopolassar's palace is a striking detail, an arch, so far as we can tell the oldest in the world. Did the Chaldæan mathematicians invent the arch or did they learn its principle from an older civilization? Did they in turn hand their knowledge down through

their neighbours to the Roman architects or was the value of the arch discovered independently at different times? Upon this page of architectural history the writing is so dim that I fear it will never be read.

Entering Nebuchadnezzar's palace we find the guard rooms, the halls of audience, the chambers of the king; but beyond them all, innermost, is the most dramatic of all, the banquet hall. This place has witnessed the pride and fall of many an empire, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian. Here have been many triumphant feasts, many displays of captive splendour; here has resounded down the centuries to conqueror after conqueror that dread sentence written, seared upon these very walls, *Mene, mene, tekel upharsin.*

The splendour of wealth, the pride of empire have vanished, the palaces and temples have fallen to shapeless mounds, but still the names remain stamped in strange characters in many languages upon innumerable bricks, "I am Hammurabi, I reared this temple," "I am Nebuchadnezzar, I built this palace," "I am Alexander, mine is the conquest."

As we explored the palaces and temples we passed groups of workmen who broke into a noisy chant as we approached calling upon God to bless our exalted generosity. In fact I fear they shouted this sentiment more from the desire to make a noise than for the sake of any blessing that might accrue to us therefrom. They are constantly

singing at their work, which seemed to us rather commendable than otherwise until we were told that they expended far more energy upon their choruses than upon their work.

That evening, toward sunset, we strolled across the dry channel to the groves of palms beside the village. Here was a scene of peaceful beauty in strange contrast with the dead city. Overhead the feathery palm leaves lay black against the reddening sky. Underfoot grew rich green grass fresh with moisture from the irrigating ditches which had been kept flowing all day long. In the midst of the grove was the well, a shaft fifty feet deep. The sloping palm trunks over which the waterskins are drawn to the surface stood gaunt, uncanny in the failing light. All was silent, but there was an odour of growing things, a sense of life, and the air was full of moisture.

We turned again toward the palaces where once had been the hanging gardens of Babylon. A great change has been wrought since those ancient times. The city is an abode of death. Only one living thing remains in this tomb of perished empires, only a single voice is lifted over it. A prophecy remains to be fulfilled. The sun sinks out of sight beyond the palm-trees; the sheep are driven to the shelter of their fold. The gates are closed in the village beyond the gardens and the cooking smoke of evening hovers above the roofs. A dim grey form slinks behind a pile of ancient bricks. Off among the ruins a quavering, high-

pitched cry breaks the stillness. Anguish is there and despair; then the cry is broken by screams of mocking laughter. The prophecy is fulfilled, "The jackals shall howl in their palaces and the wolves in their pleasant places."

Slowly we strolled back to the hospitable mansion, and sat down again with our hosts. The Herr Professor was speaking:

"This neighbour of ours, this Sheikh Seyid, is most trying. It is on his account that for a year we had no water to drink. A Persian pilgrim strayed from the road and came to the Sheikh's house at night. He had with him a mule, loaded with two large boxes. Such an opportunity for securing gain was not to be missed. So the Sheikh invited the pilgrim to enter the house. But no sooner had he passed the door than he received a knife-thrust in the belly.

"Having thus done a pious deed in slaying an heretical Shia, the holy man and his son broke open the boxes expecting great store of wealth. But instead of carpets and silk they found in each box the embalmed body of one of the late pilgrim's relatives.

"This sent the Sheikh into a rage: 'It is the work of Sheitan, the work of Sheitan, whom those infidels have loosed upon us. They have been digging pits in the Kasr where the holy Prophet imprisoned him, and he has come out and worked this evil.'

"So he set out to avenge himself upon us poor

infidels. He and his son brought the three dead Persians and dropped them into our well. When I came out in the morning I could see a black head above the surface of the water; and then," the Professor threw up his arms in a gesture of despair, "Ach! by the waters of Babylon I sat down and wept."

We asked the Professor if he had found any signs of the handwriting on the wall, and received this explanation:

"That the incident recorded by Daniel was an historic fact, so far as the prophet himself was present, we have every reason to believe. Moreover we have found marks that would be sufficiently strange to attract the Babylonians, and might well have inspired Daniel's prophecy. These were the marks made by Persian workmen, whom Nebuchadnezzar imported to make the blue and white tiles with which the palace and its gate were ornamented. I believe that when Cyrus's army was moving down the Tigris, and Belshazzar was celebrating his departure for the battlefield, someone in the drunken company caught sight of some of these marks. The attention of the already frightened courtiers once attracted, with the intensity of the inebriated, to such a sign, the story of the hand making the writing would easily develop. Daniel himself, you will remember, was not in the room when this apparition was seen.

"Belshazzar we know to have been a drunken weakling, doubtless crazed with fear at the time.

Ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's Palace at Babylon

So the sycophantic flatteries of the Chaldæan soothsayers were in vain, and failed to dispel the gloom that held him, and the presage of defeat. But Daniel was a man of different calibre, and so well did his bold interpretation of the ominous sign suit the whim of the King that he did not hesitate to accept it. Such is our interpretation, the scientific interpretation of the handwriting on the wall."

We retired early after dining, and the guest book was brought to us. "You must write some poetry," said our host: "poetry is necessary." The book was left with us and we were told that we should get no breakfast unless a satisfactory entry appeared in the morning.

The Kasr mound, which the Germans are excavating, is only one of a number of mounds at Babylon, all surrounded by the vast walls, described for us by Herodotus, walls that surround an area of a hundred and fifty square miles. A short distance away is the still greater mound of Babil, supposed to have been a *zigurrat*, a great terraced pyramid temple, such as were built by these settlers in the plains in imitation of the high places on the mountain-tops, where their hill-dwelling ancestors had been wont to worship. Local tradition lends it further glamour by pointing it out as the impious tower that witnessed the confusion of tongues. But the Germans have excavated another *zigurrat*, close to the palace, where they have an inscription saying, "I have builded this tower as

high as the sky." Apparently this was not an uncommon boast among the temple builders of Mesopotamia.

The work on the Kasr mound is no light matter. Not only does it contain the palace of Nabopolassar filled up by his more powerful son, the partly superimposed palace of Nebuchadnezzar himself, and the ruins that lie below them both, bearing the traces of Sennacherib's burning, but also temples, built of mud brick, after the priestly tradition that refused to discard the materials of old time for the new-fangled burnt bricks of the more advanced civilization. Furthermore succeeding peoples have made use of the materials of Babylonian times, and the excavators have to carefully level and plan the ruins of Parthian and Greek structures, built of bricks purloined from Nebuchadnezzar's palace, before they can sweep them away, and continue their exploration of the more ancient buildings. In later times came the Arabs, using the mounds as quarries, and building town and villages with bricks bearing the boastful words of ancient kings. As a result many of the walls are represented by trenches. But as they were built to last, one of them measuring twenty-five yards across, they are not as difficult to trace as might at first glance appear.

Prof. Koldewey told us he had been working there at Babylon for seven years, and needed as many more to finish the single mound. Already he had completed the plans of the two old palaces

that formed its core, as well as those of scores of less important buildings. His great regret was that the rising water level would put a stop to his downward work, as soon as the Hindia barrage was completed. But he was not the man to complain when the villagers were getting renewed life, not though it meant the loss to him for ever of those undermost palaces, the buildings that might perhaps throw most light on the history of a long-buried past.

We left Babylon in another *arabana*, or post-carriage, taking the direct road to Bagdad. With us came an old grey-bearded villager, depending on the Effendis' charity for assistance in his journey to the city. We were soon deep in conversation with him.

"*Inshallah*," said he, "God willing, I will tell you wherefore I journey to Bagdad. Behold by the grace of Allah, I have a son who is of an age to marry. I go therefore to the house of my brother whom Allah has given a daughter. Her will I take back to my son.

"But my brother is a poor man, Effendim, and can give no dower to his daughter. I too am poor, the truth of Allah, and have a daughter. So we have arranged that he also shall take my daughter for his son without a dower, and I am relieved of concern for her. However I regret that there is no dower, for I am an old man, and very poor."

We consoled the old man as best we could. But we could not help recalling the marriage

market of ancient Babylon, described by Herodotus. He tells how the pretty girls were sold to the highest bidder, and the money thus received used as portions for their homely sisters, who went to the man who was willing to take them with the smallest dower. So all were successfully married irrespective of face or fortune.

It is a good ten hours' drive to Bagdad, and it was with stiff joints that we arrived, late in the afternoon, in our rattle-trap stage-coach. But the walk through the bazaars and back across the bridge made us forget the discomforts of the journey. Were we not once more in the City of the Kalifs?

CHAPTER V

BY CARAVAN TO KURDISTAN AND THE UPPER TIGRIS

THE fate of the man who tried to hustle the East is well known, and most of us have a vague idea that things move more and more slowly the farther east we go. But the real difficulty of getting anything started, within a reasonable time, anywhere east of Suez, must be experienced to be appreciated. Indeed haste is considered impious, for has not Allah decreed that certain operations shall require certain well-known lengths of time? It is by the will of Allah that a given city is three days' journey away, and another ten, and one who seeks to cover the distance in two days or nine is acting against his decree. The wheel of his carriage is dished against an irrigating ditch—it is the punishment of Allah; a pack animal falls over the river bank and if he is not lost entirely it takes time to rescue him, the while the traveller sits on his heels and reflects upon the fate of those that fly in the face of Providence; the ferryboat is on the far side of the river and no amount of shouting will arouse its crew—again

it is the work of the Almighty who insists that it is his will that ten days and not nine shall be occupied upon this journey. Even if the traveller accepts the time set by divine decree he may be the victim of unforeseen delays, which are not ascribed to the devils as might seem appropriate, but to Allah; and he who resents them deserves the condemnation of the deity. If it rains and the roads are impassable, it is the will of Allah that a halt should be made until the sun reappears; if barley is scarce and the horses are at a distant pasturage, it is the will of Allah that the voyager smoke his pipe until such time as they may be fetched; if the torrent is in spate and the bridge carried away, that also is Allah's will, and it is the duty of every true Moslem to refrain from seeking a ford lest he suffer heavily for his presumption.

So it was not to be wondered at that we stupid, impious Americans found it quite impossible to leave Bagdad according to schedule but were compelled to put off our departure from day to day. Our bargaining was done at the consulate with men brought in by the *kavass* Mohammed, who has served for many years as guard both there and with the University of Pennsylvania excavators at Nippur. He produced first a handsomely dressed individual, in the softest of camel's wool *abas*, of which the open front revealed vest and undergarment of pearl grey broadcloth, while the green turban of a Seyyid completed his costume and proclaimed him a descendant of the Prophet.

He was a broker and professed to have the best animals in the bazaar at his disposal. His courtesy was unimpeachable, his mien almost majestic, his speech slow and flowery as became a person of great consequence, but his prices were ridiculously high and, after a whole morning of fruitless discussion and endless consumption of tiny cups of coffee, we left him to his cronies in the bazaar and sought elsewhere. A person of less dignity and greater volubility was willing to let us horses at a reasonable price as far as Mosul, but refused to take the route by which we desired to travel. He informed us in the gravest manner that the people along the route we had chosen were beasts and not men, and that they were wont to rend and devour those who dared try to pass through their country.

Finally, when many had been interviewed and found wanting, there came a sharp wiry little Arab, with a stubble of iron-grey hairs on his chin and black eyes that flashed beneath bushy brows, under a much soiled head kerchief; he was dressed in a ragged *aba*, striped brown and white, of the coarsest of coarse materials, such as is used to cover packs from the weather; his feet were bare for he had left his shoes at the door according to custom, and his undergarments were brown with the dust of many journeys. He talked with the high sharp voice that is characteristic of muleteers and comes from shouting at lagging animals; his speech was coarse but merry, for he

broke out at intervals in cackling guffaws. He proved to be a man after our own heart, for he professed no fear of any route, but would go where we pleased; his prices were fair and we beat him down in time to a reasonable figure. His animals were outside the city at pasture, but the time required to bring them in dwindled down to a day and he was willing to leave the day after that. By this time it was late and he promised to appear in the morning, when the official witnesses were available, to sign the contract which is necessary in all such transactions in Turkey.

But on the morrow he failed to appear and we had to send Mohammed to the bazaar to find him. In time he was brought in and said he had thought better of his bargain and repudiated it, asking twice the price agreed upon. So everything had to be done over again and at last we reached another agreement. This time a contract was carefully drawn up, signed, stamped, and sealed. Meanwhile the rascal had done nothing about bringing in his horses, and another day was lost. But after the contract was made there could be no further delay, for that instrument provided for a forfeiture of part of the hire of the animals in the case of a halt caused by the muleteers, and obligated us to pay for the animals' food if we desired to make a stopover en route.

The horses thus secured were as weedy a lot of old screws as the bazaars of Bagdad or any other place could well produce. Such animals are not

to be seen in a civilized country for their type disappears like the donkey before the steam-engine, the electric car, and the auto-truck. But in Turkey the transport of merchandise is entirely on the backs of animals, except over a few routes in Asia Minor and Syria where there are some pampered little railway lines. Consequently the khans of a large city are always crowded with pitiful nags, their backs so covered with festering sores from the constant rub of heated pack-saddles that, when these saddles are removed, there arises a stench almost overpoweringly offensive to tender Western nostrils. These beasts of ours, having been on grass, were fairly well healed, but great white scars on back and breast attested the suffering of former journeys. There were six scrawny pack horses that held drooping heads below the level of bony shoulders, all save one, the white mare that wore a bell and always led the caravan with head held high as if conscious of her high estate. Of our two riding animals the less said the better. To Edwin Warfield's lot fell a rather nice looking little pony that was destined to give out in a few days from the effects of starvation and a broken wind. My steed was a raw-boned veteran with an unusual array of scars that stood out white on a sorrel background; his snake-like neck was so stiff that he was quite incapable of raising his head above his shoulders; he had a most villainous countenance and an eye showing the vestiges of a

sulky temper, long since broken by overwork; finally he was so badly shod behind that his hoofs were hopelessly deformed and he seemed to be standing on the very tip of his toes. Every one of the eight beasts was laughably "cow-hocked," a deformity that is quite universal in this country where a colt is ridden at so tender an age that its legs simply cannot stand the weight and become crooked in consequence. As we looked over this sorry aggregation we recalled stories we had heard in childhood of gallant Arab steeds, and then remembered with pleasure that, though we had contracted to pay our Arab friend several times the value of his nags, there was no stipulation that title should pass to us at this or any future time.

With the owner of our caravan were three other men, comparatively young, with typical Arab features, all dressed in the same rough-and-ready fashion as their leader. Our party was completed by a servant, Asoufi ibn Jeju (Joseph son of Jesus), a Chaldæan of Bagdad whom we succeeded in engaging at the eleventh hour to accompany us as cook and interpreter, in place of the faithless Thomas whose fears overcame his greed for gold. He was a small man, not over thirty, with a pleasant enough face, who had served in the house of some English residents and picked up a smattering of their language; he was to prove an excellent camp cook, honest and faithful in every way.

At last the day arrived that was to witness our

departure from the city of the kalifs. The caravan was in the street long before dawn. Asoufi awakened us and carried the baggage to the court, where it was sorted out for packing. Mohammed, the *kavass*, was in attendance lending sanction to our going, as did two blue-uniformed *zaptiehs*, who were to form our guard on the first stage of our journey. It was cold, as the mornings of early March are apt to be, and we partook shiveringly of breakfast and then discussed our reckoning with Fransu our host. This over we found the loads already roped to the thick pads that serve as pack-saddles and ready to move. There were two very light "miner's tents" and full camping equipment, a rifle and shotgun for each of us, for we were looking forward keenly to the sport we might expect in the mountains, and a very limited supply of tinned goods such as beef, jam, butter, and crackers. Oranges we carried in considerable quantity and we had a small stock of rice, potatoes, and dates which we planned to renew at intervals and eke out with fowls, eggs, and native bread purchased on the way. Our wardrobe was necessarily limited but we had to be provided both for very cold and very hot weather and carry a suit of "store-clothes" for the time we expected to spend in civilization, in the far-away Caucasus and Constantinople, for our trunks had been sent to Vienna from Bombay. All this we sent ahead on the pack horses with Asoufi and his bedding and a *zaptieh* as guard, while we rode to the Ot-

toman Bank to finish some business that had dragged on as things will in the East.

Then we made our way through the jostling throngs in the crowded bazaars, past the government building with the green-clad sentries, and out by the picturesque north gate of the city where the caravans gather, and whence the desert stretches away without a break save a few low, narrow ridges of clay that mark the dry beds of disused irrigating ditches. Having passed the groups of camels that always stand about here and followed the *zaptieh* across the tangled maze of tracks from which he finally chose the one we were to follow, we turned upon one of those ditches and looked back toward the city. Dimly outlined against the sky were the minarets and domes of Bagdad. Before them the mirage spread a sheet of crystal water, and along the way we had come a caravan of camels was clearly reflected in the shining pools of a great marsh, where we knew was nought but sun-baked clay. We took a last look at the historic city and bade its romance-haunted towers a final farewell. Then on we rode, glancing back ever and anon to see the mirage creep nearer and nearer, until the city rose into the sky, was reversed in the ghostly waters, and then disappeared. It seemed to have been transported by the magic carpet back into the pages of the *Arabian Nights* whence we had conjured it a fortnight ago.

That first day was much like our journey to

A *Zaptieh* on the Bank of the Diala River

Babylon which I have already described. We marched over flat clay desert, broken only by an occasional square mound, marking the site of a forgotten mud village, or the half-ruined tomb of a saint. We encountered party after party of Persian pilgrims and not a few merchandise caravans of camels, horses, and mules. Upon this road there is a large traffic in tobacco brought down, in large bales, chiefly from Persia. Being a most profitable article of commerce it is usually borne by the best animals, generally horses. They move along pretty rapidly for pack animals, led by a big stallion gaily decorated with tassels and hung with a profusion of bells. Every caravan has a few bells and their constant tinkling is the most familiar sound of the road.

It is the universal custom with caravans to make a very short march the first day. So we camped at the first water we came to after leaving Bagdad, having journeyed about six hours. It was a foul pool of muddy water beside the high blank walls of a great caravanserai, called Khan Beni Sahat. It is a splendid building in the Persian style, such as the kalifs used to build when this now desert country was the garden spot of the world. A few such buildings are still to be seen in Persia, but this is the only one we encountered in Turkey. Its outer walls rise as high as a two-storey house around a space some fifty yards square, and are broken only by a huge doorway, almost as high as the wall, in the shape

of the graceful pointed arch that is characteristic of Persian architecture. The doorway is closed by a massive wooden gate studded with iron. Within is a courtyard in which scores of camels were kneeling, while their masters and a number of pilgrims were ensconced in deep niches which completely surrounded it. The niches, finished like the doorway with the pointed arch, were good-sized rooms, so thick was the brickwork; and each was lighted by a glowing fire of charcoal just bright enough to set off the dark figures around it. The sight was intensely Eastern and harked back to the magnificent days of the Abbasids. The shapely niches, shadowing the cooking fires of evening, the kneeling camels, and the high walls with the massive doorway, formed such a picture as Marco Polo must have seen in his pioneer journey to these very lands.

We did not stop in this historic inn but in one of the lesser ones that surrounded it. There we stabled our horses, and pitched our tent in a ruined courtyard outside. This operation was interestedly watched by a group of hangers-on. Like all the Arabs we encountered they were silent and courteous, never in the way, and never trying to see more than was laid open to view. When Asoufi brought us tea made from the water of the place, they delicately left us; all of which was quite different from the way their Kurdish neighbours behaved as we journeyed northward. The tea we had to make quite strong to

conceal the colour and odour of the water. Like every desert pool, the one here was used indifferently for washing and drinking, while all the drainage of the place runs into it, and it is kept stirred up by the animals. Even at that we had to pay for it at the rate of a *piastre* and a half (six cents) a bucket. Fowls, however, we found far from expensive for we secured a pair for eighteen cents.

One generally thinks of this country of Mesopotamia as hot, and hot it is in the summer. But that March night was bitter cold and we shivered all through it in our sleeping-bags on the cold ground. When we rose by the light of a brilliant moon an hour before the dawn, the water in which we essayed to wash was quickly covered by a film of ice. We lost no time in getting into warm clothes and starting away in the chill grey dawn.

This early rising became our daily custom during the months we spent upon this expedition. It is decidedly to be recommended, for the usual day's journey takes about eight hours and may stretch to ten, without counting time occupied in crossing rivers in ferryboats, as we constantly had to do in the mountains. While on the march the baggage animals plod along steadily at about three miles an hour without a halt. We ourselves used to ride ahead often taking one of the two *zaptiehs* as guide. We constantly left the road to examine a ruin or to find a view, and later to make geological observations. If an early start is made, there is

plenty of time to linger by the way if anything of interest presents, and at the end of the day a few hours of daylight remain for sightseeing or any other occupation the traveller may be interested in.

About noon of this second day we reached the Diala River, the most southerly affluent of the Tigris, which it joins some ten miles below Bagdad. On its banks we passed the ancient town of Bakuba, thirty miles from the capital, which is the only town of any consequence remaining in this once populous neighbourhood. Its position on the bank of a river has saved it from the destruction that overtook scores of others when the irrigating canals were allowed to decay. It is now hidden by groves of palm trees, behind high walls, irrigated by water hoists operating on the precipitous clay banks of the Diala.

All day our road followed this river, meandering capriciously among a maze of low mounds indicating recently abandoned cultivation. There was an occasional village on the top of a high bank, and we still met camels and pilgrims, though less frequently than before. Such a road is not a road at all as we know it but a collection of footpaths that sometimes merge into one and then spread out in a flat place like a fan. Post-carriages run to Bakuba and there we saw wheel-marks, but beyond there is only caravan travel, and consequently no marks but those made by the hoofs of animals marching always head to tail.

The road is very dusty and usually quite without vegetation, though here on the river bank we found crocuses and little red tulips.

Travelling by such a road we came to a couple of mud-walled inns beside a palm grove, and rode up to them with a party of pilgrims on their way back to Persia. They entered one of the khans through a low doorway in a mud wall capped with camel-thorn. This device is to keep out thieves and is exactly paralleled in Europe and America by the familiar custom of covering a coping with broken glass.

After a dip in the swift but brackish river we camped in the other inn, which merits a brief notice because it is typical of the poorer class of khans that are scattered along these desert roads. It was built around a court some thirty yards square on three sides of which were cloister-like corridors in which the horses were stabled. On the fourth side was a high doorway, big enough to admit a loaded camel, and rooms for the accommodation of travellers, dark and stuffy, with a low door, no windows, and walls black with charcoal smoke. In such an inn we pitched our tent in the cleanest place we could find. They were never very dirty for the desert sun is the best disinfectant in the world. Here at this khan by the Diala the only other occupants were a flock of sheep driven in at sunset by a ragged young shepherd. That night, like all those we spent in the desert, was very beautiful. Through the

cold dry atmosphere the brillant stars shed a rare effulgence over the dark cloisters, discovering mysteriously the sleeping sheep that huddled in a corner. Our brown pyramid tents in the centre, glowing with the lamps within, were exotic enough, but seemed to blend with their surroundings and lent a familiar, almost homelike touch, to a scene that would otherwise have been bleak enough despite its romantic atmosphere.

The next day we passed through country that became more and more hummocky and was fairly well watered by streams that have been diverted from the Diala in fairly ancient times, and are the ruins of a once splendid irrigating system. But too long continued irrigation without proper precautions has resulted in the soil becoming impregnated with salt, so that it is quite useless except where water is very plentiful. Many of the smaller streams are so salty as to be almost undrinkable and all are noticeably brackish. They are in deep beds with more or less steep banks and a considerable current, without which they would soon fill up with silt and become ridges like their counterparts near Bagdad.

One of them we crossed by a really handsome bridge of enduring brickwork that was built under Persian influence and certainly dates from pre-Turkish times, very likely from early Mohammedan. An excellent roadway is supported by six narrow pointed arches of massive brickwork, giving an impression of strength and solidity.

The Bridge at Deli Abbas from the Roof of the Khan

The piers are excellently made and skilfully shaped so as to resist the erosion of the current. The approaches of the bridge are strong abutments, built so as to resist the tendency to undermine the banks. All this presents a strange contrast to the Turkish bridges I shall have occasion to describe later, which have weak, ill-planned arches, insufficient piers, and no roadways, so that the caravan animals have to clamber up one side of a steep arch and slide down the other as best they can. So usual is this that the fact that there are bridges on a certain road increases the price that must be paid for animals to travel it, especially if a carriage is used.

Cold as were the nights and cheerless the mornings, the sun was quite powerful at midday and the temperature would rise from five or ten degrees of frost to very nearly eighty, making us roll up coats and sweaters and ride in our shirt sleeves. The reason for this is that the bare ground reflects the full force of the sun and does not store up any heat to temper the sunless hours. Besides the heat of the sun we occasionally encountered clouds of tiny biting flies that rose from the very roadway and settled on every exposed spot that was not kept in rapid motion. In spite of furious fanning we generally came out the worse for their attentions.

We camped that night in the last Arab village that we were to encounter before reaching Mosul. We found a typical khan beside a brackish water-

course spanned by an excellent bridge of three round arches. The inn in this village of Deli Abbas boasted a second story of a single room with three barred windows, built over the section intended for travellers' use, beside the high doorway. The village consisted of ramshackle mud huts, the more pretentious provided with flat domes like those of Bagdad. Above them rose the picturesque palms that are always to be seen about human habitations in this land of Mesopotamia. Across the stream were large walled date gardens, and beyond, orchards of blossoming almond and pomegranate. Among the palms were closely walled mud huts with narrow doors giving glimpses of squalid interiors occupied by red-robed, dirty-faced children, and sleeping dogs. On every convenient corner of the dilapidated walls was a newly made stork's nest with a black and white, red-beaked parent-to-be sitting contentedly in the midst of the piled-up rubbish where her mate would soon join her, returning for the night from his rummaging after rats and frogs along the river bank.

These awkward, but picturesque, birds are characteristic sights in these villages. They are always clean and attractive, which the people are not. Without them and the palm-trees the habitations would be ugly and colourless. The Arabs call the bird *haji kleklek*, referring to his migratory habit, for *haji* means pilgrim, and the noise he makes with his bill, a sharp clattering

sound, always to be heard at sunset and sunrise. They are far from being the only feathered haunters of the groves and villages for the pretty crested hoopoes are often to be seen, ceaselessly searching walls and trees for insects and occasionally uttering their pleasant call. They are not unlike the American flicker and quite similar in habit. The glossy black and white magpies are to be seen constantly, hopping about gracefully balanced by their long tails, always sociable and inclined to be pert. Here at Deli Abbas there were also large numbers of doves, coming in from their feeding-ground in some fields beyond the groves and flying about in the trees preparatory to going to roost.

These suggested a pleasant variation in our menu and Edwin Warfield set out with a gun to act upon that suggestion. While so occupied he foregathered with a grey-bearded villager upon a similar mission. He was armed with an antiquated fowling piece, wrapped with wire to prevent its bursting. The lock, of a long obsolete percussion pattern, was attached to the stock with a piece of twine. After the fashion of sportsmen the two compared notes, and weapons, and then the greybeard set out to show his skill. Upon a palm leaf that overhung the wall beside them sat a fat magpie, wisely cocking his head, and blinking at the strangers beneath. The old man raised his piece to within a couple of feet of the bird, who began to look amused as he peered

down the gaping barrel. Taking careful aim the sportsman pulled the trigger. There was a sound like the bursting of a paper bag, a large puff of smoke, and the bird flew jauntily off to another tree.

These Arabs know how to make more serious use of firearms, however. That very night we heard the crack of rifles, and the sound of running feet, and learned next morning that a certain one had killed his enemy. Such killings are often the result of blood feuds, which are, however, less common and far less long-lived than among the Kurds, who are less emotional but more vindictive.

The following day we crossed the Hamrin hills, an old sea margin, a great deposit of sand and pebbles, built up by the waves of the Persian Gulf, before the Tigris and Euphrates had carried down the enormous deposits of silt that have formed Mesopotamia. Behind this deposit a valley has been cut and the wind and rain of centuries have carried away much of the sand and pebbles leaving a ridge made up of a jumbled mass of conical hills. On the other side we came to the Diala again. This river waters the valley and cuts through the ridge below where we crossed it. Here in this great flat valley, averaging ten miles in width, there is some cultivation, but not nearly as much as there might be if full use were made of the streams that receive a fairly constant supply of water from the hills on

Crossing the Jebel Hamrin *en Route* to Kara Tepe

the north-east. This is chiefly due to the laziness of the people, but it must be confessed that the parching summer sun is a deterrent to agriculture.

Marching through this valley we came to Kara Tepe, our first stone-built village. The people too are different, for though Arabs were to be seen in the streets, and though the town bears a Turkish name, most of the people were Kurds. We were now in southern Kurdistan and beginning to make the acquaintance of a people of whom we were to see a great deal. They are a light people, blue-eyed, and commonly with flaxen and red hair. Here in the south their dress differs little from the Arabs, but they are usually to be distinguished by a turban, generally of blue cotton, wound around a close-fitting skull-cap of embroidered cotton cloth. On entering this country our muleteers also adopted that headdress, when but for their dark complexions and sharp noses they might have been taken for the village Kurds. We often saw men with zouave jackets embroidered with gold and silver, but these men were not of the local population, being wayfarers from farther east. Many of them wore trousers, unknown among the Arabs, made very baggy but drawn in around the ankles. Among the local townspeople all the way to Mosul we found the *aba* quite generally worn, but it was often of dark blue cloth, while among the Arabs brown and black are the only colours used.

There were several inns in the town, and the

one in which we stopped was very large and picturesque, with its cloistered stables and a cloistered upper storey over the gate. The latter was occupied by the last caravan of Persian pilgrims we were to meet. Several merchandise caravans were amply provided for in the capacious stables, and we easily found an unoccupied corner in the broad court-yard to pitch our tent. On the opposite side a caravan was unpacked, and the saddles were removed from the galled backs preparatory to rubbing down the horses. Unfortunately the wind was in our direction and brought with it the foul odour of putrefaction that had been going on under those saddles all day long.

Another day's journey northward took us through low rolling hills to the large market town of Kifri. It was built of dark sandstone, and had a bazaar, roofed like those of Bagdad, but smaller. We rode under the vaulted roof between rows of booths where goods were exposed for sale. In one street were baskets of dates, raisins, and apricots; bags of rice and potatoes, grains, and other edibles. Then we turned a corner and found in the booths only articles of clothing, embroidered zouave jackets, long tunics, baggy trousers, and *abas*. From this bazaar we turned quite suddenly into a narrow door that led into the court-yard of an inn. The court was small and paved, so it was impossible to pitch a tent. But above there was a cloister-like gallery with rooms

A Camp in the Khan at Kara Tepe

behind it. In one of these we placed our goods and prepared to sleep on the "verandah" outside.

The people here were offensively curious, crowding around us, laughing and mimicking us, and indulging in rude horseplay among themselves. When we went out to take pictures and look around the town we were followed by a hooting mob that we could shake off only by returning to the inn and ordering the great wooden gate shut behind us. Such treatment is almost unheard of among Arabs, who are always quiet and courteous. It is rare too among the Kurds, who have a high sense of hospitality and will not annoy a guest. But this town of Kifri, like many of the larger places in this region, is largely Turkish. These Turks belong to a tribe, quite distinct from the Ottomans and the Seljuks, that settled here early in the thirteenth century and formed an almost independent kingdom, though they were made to pay tribute at times both to Bagdad and to the Seljuk Sultan at Koniah. Their centre has always been at the large city of Kerkuk, eight days' march from Bagdad, of which I shall have much to say later.

The next morning we set out for Tuz Karmati along the foot of a ridge of sharp hills broken now and again by a gorge through which runs a considerable torrent during the season of winter rains. During that season the valley that spread out on our left is a great swamp, but in the summer it is thoroughly baked. A little care would make

it as highly productive as it once was, a fact that is borne witness to by frequent mounds. Many of these are mere barrows such as were built in Europe by prehistoric peoples and by some of the Indian tribes in America. But there are some very large ones that must cover the ruins of castles and temples dating, belike, from Assyrian times.

Early in the day we were overtaken by a well-dressed Kurd with blue eyes and a burly red moustache. He rode a handsome grey mare, and carried across his saddle-bow a Martini rifle, made locally in imitation of the old British army pattern. He entered into conversation with us, speaking Kurdish to one of our *zaptiehs* who translated into Arabic to Asoufi who translated into English to us. He asked our nation and parentage and the object of our journey and explained that he was *mudir* or mayor of Tuz Karmati, our next stop. On carrying our acquaintance further he asked us to dine with him that evening. We accepted with pleasure and he thereupon rode away with his servant, his *zaptieh*, and his greyhound to prepare for our coming.

We reached Tuz at the end of the day and found it a rather large village, picturesquely located beside a wide stream-bed at the foot of a gorge. A few palm-trees rose among the houses and overlooked the mud-walled orchards where the apricot and almond trees were rich with delicate bloom. We rode through the little bazaar and turned

A Bridge of Persian Design on the Road to Kifri

from it into the inn yard. You can easily imagine the care with which we removed the stains of travel before permitting a servant to guide us to the *mudir's* house. We found our host seated upon a divan in the street before his door. With him was a sharp-faced man in Turkish dress. After profound greetings we were offered a seat, and tea in tiny glasses was set before us. We found we could talk most easily through Asoufi with the Turkish gentleman, whom we found to be a *mirzah*, a teacher, acting as tutor to the son of the house.

A beggar with a long grey beard, dressed solely in a coarse ragged cloak, came up and garrulously demanded alms. He reviled the *mudir* for a stingy rascal, much to that gentleman's amusement, and when our servant gave him some paras he compared us very favourably, unbelievers as we were, with our Moslem host. Finally he became such a nuisance that two *zaptiehs* had to drag him away.

We talked of the location, climate, size, importance, and wages of America and complimented our host on the cleanliness of his village and the questionable improvement he was effecting by paving the streets with cobblestones from the river bed. As we talked, a herd of lean, mangy cattle were driven by. An occasional villager passed on foot or on a donkey, raising his hand to his forehead and lowering it again to his breast with the words, "*salaam aleikom*" (*pax vobiscum*).

After half an hour dinner was announced and we passed through the court-yard into a little vaulted whitewashed room with narrow windows, where we took our places upon a broad divan. A *zaptieh* brought a jug and a basin and poured water on our right hands. Then a table was brought and two *zaptiehs* entered bearing a large tray which was placed on the table. In the centre was a pilau—a bowl of rice topped with raisins and the remains of a chicken. Before each of us was a plate and beside it a spoon and a large flat cake of unleavened bread neatly folded. In two of the plates was boiled cabbage and in the others stewed apricots. Each of us without further ceremony attacked the bowl of rice with his spoon, ate from whatever plate happened to be before him, and then exchanged it with his neighbour whose plate contained a different victual. There was a bowl of yaourt, milk curdled by a process much used throughout the Near East, into which each dipped his spoon. A large bowl of fresh milk was supplied with a wooden dipper which served its purpose admirably.

Dinner was over when each diner had had his fill, and then the remains were removed and the servants did justice to them. Later we had a few minutes' conversation, invited the *mudir* to visit us in America, and walked back to the inn with a *zaptieh* and a lantern bearer.

Another day's ride along the same valley brought us to the village of Taukh, where we

From the Khan of Tuz Karmati, the Most Attractive Objects in a Mesopotamian Village

succeeded in obtaining sufficient water to bathe. This operation we performed in the shelter of the stables, with the assistance of a bucket and a wash basin, before the amazed glances of some natives, who were amused, if not edified, at so strange a misuse of water. Then followed a long day at the end of which we reached the metropolis of the country between the desert and the high mountains, the Turkish town of Kerkuk.

CHAPTER VI

BY CARAVAN TO KURDISTAN AND THE UPPER TIGRIS (*Continued*)

WE approached Kerkuk through a wilderness of mounds, mostly of a roughly conical shape, marking the site of ancient Assyrian temples and tombs. The city itself was visible from a considerable distance because it is largely built upon the largest mound of all. To reach it we had to thread our way across half-dry water-courses amid walled gardens and extensive grave-yards. We found the city most unattractive. The houses are stone-built and mostly covered with stucco, and the walls are unprovided with projecting windows such as relieve the blank walls of Bagdad. The mosques are few and solidly built, the minarets heavy and undecorated. There is nowhere any of the grace and lightness that comes from Persian influence, which has made itself strongly felt in Bagdad and has been conveyed thence to Mosul, but has not penetrated to this pre-eminently Turkish town.

We passed through a desolate narrow street and turned into a wider one lined with coffee-houses

before which groups of men in various costumes, especially the green military uniform, sat smoking and drinking coffee. Thence we plunged into a short covered bazaar that runs along a river bed that was almost dry and full of a maze of boulders and cobblestones. In the crowd that filled the street and jostled us indifferently our party became separated and our *zaptieh* guide bewildered. At the end of the bazaar we brought up at a place where rough-looking Kurds, with great turbans and baggy trousers, rode bony nags down among the boulders of the river and loaded them with water-skins. Here we paused a moment, but then turned once more into a little square, encumbered with high benches on which crowds of men were squatting, fully half of them in uniform. Across the square was a high, pointed doorway, a Singer sewing-machine advertisement above it, and a coffee-house on either side. This we entered, finding a narrow court-yard within surrounded by stables.

Steep flights of narrow steps gave access to a cloistered gallery that ran around three sides of the court above the stables, with rooms opening on to it. In one of these we hastily deposited our baggage and shut the door in the face of the crowd of ragamuffins that had followed us into the court and stood about hooting and getting in our way while the horses were being off-saddled. Once safe behind the barred door we took a hasty inventory of our personal effects and fortunately

found them intact. Then we discussed a plan of action, for in such a den of thieves we hesitated to leave the baggage to the uncertain care of Asoufi, and the *zaptiehs*, as usual, had left us at the gate of the inn. The matter was settled by Edwin Warfield expressing himself ready to rest after the long day in the saddle. So I sallied forth alone to try my luck, and take some photographs of Kerkuk.

Here I must ask permission to digress for a moment to explain what manner of place this is. It is situated in the extreme southern part of the Mosul vilayet (government) and is the only town of large size between Mosul and Bagdad, having a population of about 20,000. It is the seat of a *mutessarif*, an official next in rank to the *vali*, and the headquarters of an army corps. Although Mosul is its provincial capital there is great rivalry between the two cities for the capital is purely an Arab city. Turks and Arabs never did get on well together and Kerkuk is distinctly Turkish, although Kurdish is spoken commonly in the bazaars and Arabic is generally understood. This is an excellent example of the mingling of races in this unhappy country. Here is a city originally Assyrian, later Persian and largely Christian, and finally possessed by roving Turkoman tribesmen who have settled within its walls, dispossessed the former inhabitants, and made their language the language of its commerce. They speak a pure Turanian tongue absolutely different from

the Semitic Arabic and Aryan Kurdish, both of which almost every Kerkukli must understand in order to do his daily marketing. The average American speaks only English; German and French are unusual accomplishments. On the continent well-educated people generally speak two languages beside their own, but they all belong to the Aryan group and are closely allied verbally and grammatically. But here in Kerkuk three languages are necessary, no two of which have anything in common either in their syntax or method of pronunciation.

The reason for this is that this city is on the border between the Arabs and the Kurds. To the south and west are nomad Arabs belonging to the powerful and notorious Shammar tribes, that have controlled the Jezireh,—*i.e.*,the land between the Tigris and Euphrates, north of Bagdad and south of the mountains,—since the days of the Kalifate. Dangerous as these tribes are they have had to bow to the still more accomplished rogues living to the east, the Hamavand Kurds. Up to about a year before our arrival these bandits had almost isolated the city, making the roads impassable except to strongly armed parties. Such a condition they have brought to pass at intervals whenever the power of the Hukumet, the Ottoman Government, has become slack. Each time they have kept on robbing until things got so bad that they could no longer bribe the officials with their plunder. Then powerful bodies

of troops have been sent against them and they have had to retire to the mountains or, on one or two occasions, decamp into Persian territory. Those we saw were slender, rather short men, with small hands and clean-cut features, differing in that respect from the northern Kurds, who are usually very heavy featured, so much so as to appear quite coarse. They were picturesquely dressed in their peculiar tribal costume, a long white tunic reaching to the ankle, zouave jacket heavily embroidered with gold, fitted with very narrow sleeves from which the sleeves of the tunic extend to the ground, like those of an Anglican prelate; on their heads they wear turbans of many coloured kerchiefs and on their feet red leather slippers with toes turned up like those of a mediæval gallant.

They were perfectly quiet when we came through, but not averse to robbing an unprotected caravan here and there, as we were frequently told of their doing. They are often to be seen in the city armed with government rifles taken from the troops during their recent activity between 1908 and 1912. On several occasions they cut up small parties sent against them and captured others, a small party occasionally ambuscading as many as two hundred well-armed soldiers. On one occasion they actually ambushed a body of over a hundred, took away their rifles, stripped them to the skin, and drove them like cattle back to their barracks in Kerkuk.

But the city, being Turkish, is in close sympathy with Constantinople. It is therefore a favourite recruiting ground for army officers and petty officials. The more prominent families in the city depend entirely on official billets for a livelihood. Now there are in Turkey many more army officers than can be kept in active service, for a large part of the Ottoman army exists only on paper. Moreover there are scores of minor officials whose posts either do not exist or are in some remote part of the Empire where it would be as much as a Turk's life was worth to show his face. The members of both these classes of officers without an office reside in their native places, drawing a salary if they have influence enough in high places to get it paid, but generally living on their relatives and neighbours. Half-educated in the government schools, they are vicious to a degree and merciless oppressors of such friendless people as Christian shopkeepers. Of them Kerkuk has a plethora and hence the conspicuous number of uniforms in the coffee-houses everywhere.

It was into such a place that I set out, leaving Edwin Warfield to his book and the company of the agent for Singer's sewing-machines. I had noticed that the square before the door offered some excellent opportunities for photography, so I walked hastily into it to do my kodaking before a crowd should collect and make it impossible. At a suitable distance I faced about and snapped the inn door. Then turning to the

left I diagnosed the possibilities of a covered bazaar entrance and a fairly large building with a balcony inset in the second storey, where stood a group of *zaptiehs*. This too I photographed, and then set off hastily, past the group in front of the coffee-house into a street leading toward the river bed where I anticipated some interesting views. As I rounded a corner and entered the bazaar we had traversed earlier in the day, I was overtaken from behind by two *zaptiehs*, who came up at a dead run and motioned me to retrace my steps. A large and angry-looking crowd followed at their heels and quickly barred my progress in any other direction, so perforce I followed them.

They led me to the building with the inset balcony which I now realized was the police headquarters. A flight of stairs led to the balcony, which we crossed, entering a small room with barred windows overlooking the square. Its furniture consisted of two beds and a telephone. A *zaptieh* of some presence, evidently a sergeant, was using the latter and I was asked to be seated on one of the former. Several men crowded in and more stood in the doorway. Through the barred windows I could see that the street was packed with people.

An officer in the green infantry uniform entered and spoke to the *zaptieh*. Then turning to me he addressed me in execrable French asking why I took the photographs. I explained that it

Entrance to a Bazaar in Kirkuk. The Police Headquarters, where the Author was Held as a Spy is on the Left

was out of curiosity and that I wished to take them back to America as souvenirs. He asked if I were not English. No, I was American. What was my name and city? Would I write them—in French? I took his split reed pen and a piece of paper and wrote as he directed. Then he began to speak about a letter, and I realized he meant the letter from the Vali of Bagdad authorizing our progress to Mosul. It was in my coat which I had left at the inn.

At this juncture Asoufi appeared and I sent him for the letter. Then all the queries were repeated and my answers repeated to the *zaptieh*, who shouted them fiercely into the telephone. Especial attention was given to the question of my nationality, and it was constantly suggested that I was a military officer. These facts showed plainly that I was suspected of being a British spy, and the object of my questioner was to prove that I was English and that I took photographs of such strategic points as city police headquarters for transmission to my government. Soon Asoufi returned with the letter and it was deciphered with difficulty, the *zaptieh* reading more readily than the officer and both referring to a bystander for assistance over difficult places. The letter was read haltingly over the telephone. I was then questioned as to my comrade who was mentioned in the letter. Was that my comrade (indicating Asoufi)? No, that was my chef, my *domestique*. Where was my comrade? And I

explained that I had left that gentleman at the inn.

Then they questioned Asoufi. Whence came he? What was his religion? Where born? What was his relation to us? Did he speak French? Then what language did he speak to us? English! Then they are English! "Vous êtes Anglais, Monsieur!" He thought he had me there and it was some time before he would be convinced that English was the native language of America.

This question settled there was more telephoning and more reading of the letter. Then I was told to wait fifteen minutes, that the Pasha (the general) wished to see me. I saw that the prosecution was weakening and decided it was time to make a strong stand for my rights under the capitulations. "No," I said, "it is not convenient."

This was repeated to the telephone and I was asked to wait five minutes. But no, I knew that an Oriental five minutes often stretches into hours, and I would not miss my dinner for any Pasha in command of the Sultan's forces in Kerkuk. So I insisted it was not convenient and I would not wait. After more telephoning the officer grew sulky and had nothing to say. Asoufi told me it was settled and I could go. But I was not ready to leave just then and persisted in demanding official permission to take photographs. This I finally wrung from the *zaptieh*. Then I threaded my way through the throng in the square to the inn. There I found

Edwin Warfield in some excitement for he had seen the mob gather and learned from the badly frightened Asoufi that I was the centre of interest.

Kerkuk officialdom did, however, do us one kindness; that was, to send a policeman to the inn as a bodyguard. He cleared the curious from the inn-yard and stopped a lot of ragged boys from throwing mud in at the window of our gloomy little lime-washed room. Without his presence we should not again have been able to sally forth into the streets so great was the notoriety I had secured.

The principal mosque of the city contains the tombs of Shadrach and Abednego, while Meshach also is said to be buried here, though the place of his interment has been forgotten. Without the city are the tombs of many Moslem saints. One of the most recent of them is that of Sheikh Kadr, an intimate of Sheikh Seyyid, whom I shall mention later. These two Kurdish doctors of Islam were confidants of the Sultan Abdul-Hamid, and that gentleman was accustomed to communicate with them in a private cipher and ask for their prayers whenever he had any particularly black plans. Sheikh Kadr's chief title to recognition as a holy man is derived from a brutal massacre of Christians which he instigated and led in this neighbourhood.

There is rather a large settlement of this religion in the city and surrounding towns. One of them hailed Asoufi as a cousin and after much kissing

of cheeks made an appointment with him for the evening. Most of these people wear semi-European dress and the fez, though there still remain a few who wear the Arab costume with a honey-coloured tunic, that shade having been forced on all Christians by the kalifs of Bagdad in the eighth century. They are of the Chaldæan communion and have a church supplied by a priest from Mosul. There is also in Kerkuk a strong colony of Jews who claim to be the children of the captivity of Nebuchadnezzar. They have certainly been here for a very long time for they speak Hebrew, which had practically disappeared in Palestine in the time of Christ.

Our muleteers found some close friends in the bazaar, for being consummate rascals themselves they had much in common with the larger part of the population of the city. With these congenial beings they wished to spend another day—at our expense. Consequently they did not saddle up in the morning and Asoufi brought us word from them that, as it was the Sabbath day and we were Christians, we would doubtless wish to remain in Kerkuk; would we therefore kindly advance money for the barley to feed the horses? Immediately we summoned them to our presence and gave them to understand that we were not to be trifled with. Seeing there was nothing for it but to go on they yielded and got the horses ready. Such experiences are common with Turkish muleteers and it should always be definitely

stated in the contract that a certain sum is to be forfeited by them for every day's delay beyond a stated time.

We got under way in due course and set off across the bridge. Just beyond it are the great ugly barracks where the wretched troops are quartered, with a parade ground in front, innocent of a blade of green. Behind a partly ruined wall a group of men were practising on trumpets, led by a veteran who could not do much better than they. This is the commonest experience about a military post in Turkey; someone is always playing on a bugle, producing the most awful discords imaginable. We were glad enough to get out of hearing of these particular tyros and continued through the outskirts of the town, amid picturesque fruit groves and whitewashed tombs, almost every one of which had a stork's nest perched on its slab-sided dome. So we passed out of the city, threading our way down the side of the old mound that covers the Assyrian city, past some stagnant pools where stock are watered, and so entered the unirrigated country, glad enough to shake the dust of Kerkuk from our feet.

All day we rode over a series of parallel mountain spurs, each exactly the same height and shape as its neighbours, and all separated by exactly identical trough-like valleys. It was monotonous to say the least but interesting because it throws light on a curious convention used in the Assyrian sculptures, where mountains

are represented by figures that resemble ripple marks on sand. This convention was undoubtedly inspired by these rolling hills which were in the heart of Assyria. It was appropriate enough in this land but applied to the mountains of Armenia and Palestine it is curiously inappropriate; but the Assyrian artist knew of only one way of depicting highlands.

Occasionally the prospect was broken by the appearance of little groups of nomad Kurds, with flocks pasturing around their black tents. The shepherd boys were always picturesque in great square cloaks of felt, the upper corners sticking out from the boys' shoulders. Each is always provided with a crook and often a gun also, for the David of these hills smites his Goliath with a Martini bullet, not with a pebble from the brook.

Of birds we saw a few, especially pigeons. These we shot almost every day as a variation from our otherwise uninteresting menu of eggs and tough fowls. Occasionally a few ducks and geese were encountered in a swampy place and offered a chance shot. In the desert and plowed land were sand grouse of a variety considerably larger than those common in India, and also the little bustard, though we did not see its larger brother very much until we got north of Mosul. There were great numbers of tall grey cranes generally in pairs or small groups. They were very wary and we never succeeded in bagging any. On a previous day we saw huge flocks flying over our

heads, so that the sky was dark with them and the air filled with their harsh cries.

After crossing interminable numbers of those hopelessly uninteresting ridges we came out on the last one and overlooked the valley of the Lesser Zab, a considerable river that rises on the Turko-Persian frontier and after defiling through the hills flows due south-west into the Tigris.

Our road soon brought us down to its bank at the town of Altun Keupri, a name that means Golden Bridge. The erection that gives the town this name is a bridge only by courtesy, and is characteristic of Turkish efforts in this department of architecture, contrasting strikingly with the bridges of Persian workmanship farther south. It is simply a very much attenuated pointed arch, spanning the narrow, rocky bed of the Zab. There is no roadway at all, and he who would cross must climb up the slippery stones of which the arch is built. The loaded caravan animals had to be pushed and boosted to the summit, whence they slid down the other side, just like sliding down a railway embankment. Insult is added to injury by the collector of tolls, who demands from the traveller a sum in silver for the privilege of risking his life and substance upon the dangerous gable of this Bridge of Gold.

Having successfully negotiated this difficult hazard we entered the town, passed some crowded coffee-houses, and traversed the length of a narrow bazaar. This soon brought us to the edge of

the town where we found an almost deserted inn of which we took possession. The court was covered with cobblestones, but on the sagging roof of one side of the quadrangle was a second-storey room reached by a tumble-down flight of steps from the court. In this we established ourselves, finding it not unpicturesque. Below us was the town with a tumble-down mosque, and the vaulted roof of the bazaar rising above the flat roofs of the houses. On the other side was a wilderness of groves presided over by the domed tomb of a sheikh, and farther still nought but grassless downs.

Altun Keupri is another Turkish town, though there are many Arabs in it, and the navigation of the river, which is entirely by skin rafts, or *keleks*, is in their hands. It is the seat of a *mudir* (mayor) and we were favoured by a call from that dignitary. He was a short stout Turk, a native of the country, and wore European dress and the fez, as became his rank. He was followed by several officials and a couple of *zaptiehs*. He was much interested in our firearms, especially my automatic pistol, which he examined with a childish nonchalance and lofty indifference to probable consequences that was almost startling to the two Anglo-Saxons present; though the Orientals seemed to accept it as the natural way to treat such an instrument. He told me he had a very fine Martini rifle and would swap it for the pistol with anything else I cared to ask for. Now a Martini is a very

primitive type of breech-loader, firing only one shot and that of great size; so simple is the mechanism that it is very commonly copied by local gunsmiths. Such a rifle in the hands of a petty official is apt to be worn, rusty, and worm-eaten, not unlike the one Kipling warns his young British soldier not to call a "cross-eyed old bitch." Therefore I declined the *mudir's* kind offer with thanks. He continued to bargain and finally bade me name my price, even to the half of his kingdom. But an automatic pistol is not a thing to allow one's self to be lightly clear of in such a land as this, where it is not unlikely to prove an invaluable asset. So I had to disappoint the old *mudir*, much as I would have liked to present him the gun as a memento of our visit.

The next day we marched up a wide, once fertile valley, the ancient land of Adiabene. Frequent views of snow-clad mountains to the north showed us how near we were to the "Turkish Switzerland," Hakkiari, the home of the Kurds. In the valley villages are few, for the hot summer sun parches every green thing and compels the population to seek the mountain pastures at that season. That this was not always the case is proved by frequent mounds, often of great mass, strewn with potsherds and broken bricks. The ruins of ancient irrigating works are also to be traced almost everywhere.

Up this ancient valley we marched toward its capital, Arbela, now called by its inhabitants

Erbil. From a great distance we saw it, rising above the level of the valley, showing clearly in the light of the afternoon against the black mountain that walls the valley, above which was just the suggestion of snow-covered peaks. A long, long time we marched toward it without seeming to get much nearer. For it is one of those places, familiar to the traveller by caravan, which may be seen when it is little larger than a man's hand, yet seems almost in reach in the clear air. The city loomed up above the valley level, an effect that was heightened by a slight mirage, but we discovered when we approached that it is really set in a hollow, and owes its prominent appearance to a tremendous mound, upon which it is built.

This mound contains the ruins of an Assyrian city and the vast temples of the goddess Ishtar of Arbela. She was probably the goddess that Asshur took with him when he "went forth and builded Nineveh" (Gen. x., xi.), for she became the tutelary deity of Assyria, and her city of Arbela the religious capital of that empire. So widely respected was she that we hear of her making a journey in the fifteenth century B.C. to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and spending some time in that land which she loved. The city must be about four thousand years old and has been continually inhabited all that time, the sacred city of many peoples, tributary to succeeding empires, Assyrian, Mede, Persian, Greek, Parthian, Roman, Armenian, Sassanid, and Ara-

The City of Erbil, the Ancient Arbela

bian. Today an Ottoman garrison is quartered on the great mound beneath which lie, untouched, the ruined shrines of Ishtar.

The top of the mound is covered with brick buildings that crowd to the very edge from which a few seem to have been shouldered. These unfavoured ones are grouped at the foot of the zigzag ascent that rises to those above. They seem to be guarding the water-supply which, as usual in this region, is but a dirty pool used indifferently for washing and drinking. Beside it we found a new inn, with a second storey around all four sides of the court. The rooms were clean and whitewashed and had each a barred window. Many of them were occupied by officers and officials. In one of them we made ourselves comfortable while a crowd of picturesque Arab merchants wrangled in the court below over loads of cotton goods and dates, which they were selling to Kurdish peddlers for their mountain-grown tobacco.

The people of the city are largely mixed but more than half are Baban Kurds whose dialect—quite different from that of the northern Hakkiari tribes—has become the language of the city. Being an important garrison town it boasts of many uniforms and a large officialdom, mostly Turks. But most of the troops we learned were Arabs, and had officers of their own race. There doubtless are descendants of the Assyrians but they have so far changed their dress and language

as to be unnoticeable. I was unable to learn anything of the local Christians, who are most likely to belong to that race, and may have traditions that would throw light on the subject.

No sooner had we made ourselves comfortable at the inn than an infantry officer entered and addressed us in excellent German. I had a long conversation with him in that language, which he said he had learned at the war college at Constantinople where a group of German instructors are seeking to remould the Ottoman army according to Prussian standards. As we talked I translated what he said to Edwin Warfield.

"What language do you speak to him?" asked the officer.

"English," said I.

"But," accusingly, "you said you were American."

"Everyone speaks English in America."

"What! Is there no American language?"

He said that the people of this country of Irak know what they are doing. They do not love the Turks and are glad they were beaten in the Balkan war. They laugh at them.

"I should not speak so, for I am an officer, but I am an Arab of Bagdad, and we people of Irak have our plans well forward. If you were English I would not speak so freely, but America is very far away, farther than Yemen, is it not? I have been there to the war. It is many days' journey on the sea." (Yemen is one of

the Red Sea provinces, the seat of a recent Arab revolt.)

"No, we do not fear the Russians or the English or the Turks! We will not fight against the Bulgarians. Let the Turks defend Constantinople. But if the Russians come from the Black Sea, or the English from the Persian Gulf, we will fight, for we are the people of Irak and we do not love the Turks."

This is an excellent example of the attitude of the people of Asiatic Turkey. The Semitic Arabs and Aryan Kurds and Armenians cordially hate their conquerors, the Turanian Turks.

He was much interested in the map of eastern Asiatic Turkey recently published by the Royal Geographical Society, and became absorbed in spelling out familiar names upon it. He wished me to point out Yemen but the map does not extend so far south as to include it, a fact that convinced him still more of its great distance, comparable to that of America. Reckoning distances by the time it takes to cover them, as Orientals usually do, he was right. In fact we were then more remote from Constantinople than America is; for by the fastest travelling the capital might be reached from Erbil in three weeks, but the distance from Constantinople to New York can easily be covered in half that time.

The event in history most closely connected with Arbela is the great battle in which Alexander the Great defeated Darius, the last of the Achæ-

menian kings of the vast Persian empire founded by the great Cyrus. But the battle itself was not fought before Arbela, or even in sight of it, but in the plain on the other side of the river which today we call the Great Zab. The Macedonian had already possessed himself of the coasts of the Mediterranean, having defeated Darius at Issus, in Asia Minor. Although the Persians were rulers of all that vast territory, their real home was in the mountainous country which we now call by their name, and the empire of the sons of Hystaspes, father of Cyrus, had been extended to the borders of Thibet, and included much of what is now known as Hindustan. From these lands Darius collected an army of great size. There were wild horsemen from the deserts of Khorassan, Afghans and their neighbours in northern India and Beluchistan, Scythians, Parthians, Hyrcanians, and fierce mountaineers from the Caucasus,—all these and more, besides the picked troops of the Medes and Persians, and of Babylon and Syria that formed the backbone of the vast host.

It was in one of those periods in which meteorological conditions conspire to produce an extremely rainy climate, when these valleys were as well supplied with meteoric waters as are the rich grain lands of our Middle West today. It was one of those periods of climatic variation in which the pendulum had swung toward the maximum on the rainy side. These lands of Adiabene,

Mesopotamia, Irak, Persia, Afghanistan, and Sind, which are now practically desert, were rich garden spots, supporting enormous populations. Had this not been the case, the army of Darius could never have been brought together. Historians of the time, such as Arrian and Diodorus, assert that it was composed of over a million men. Later Justin names half that number. But even if we allow that the earlier historians were Greeks, and wished to make Alexander's enemy seem as formidable as possible, and if we reduce their estimates to one half or one fourth or even one fifth of a million, still we have an army many times as vast as could be supported in this country today, even if irrigation were developed to the limit. There is positively not enough water available in this valley to irrigate a quarter of the arable land; and an army of ten thousand, essaying to pass through it and remain in it, as Darius did, would certainly starve.

Added to this great number of men Darius had tens of thousands of horses, for most of his levies from northern Persia were horse-bowmen; and he had large bodies of picked heavy cavalry from among his own people. There were some elephants too, fifteen in number, and this is the first recorded use of these animals in war. Their presence is interesting, not so much for the fact that they had to be fed large quantities of good forage while at Arbela, but for the even more significant fact that they came from this side of the Indus,

i.e., from the desert of Sind, where today even the cattle are puny for lack of green fodder. The huge, unwieldy beasts had to be brought either through Afghanistan and marched across the burning salt desert of central Persia, where today the wells are separated by great distances and where the roads are practicable only for camels, or else along the coast of Beluchistan and the Persian Gulf, a route traversed by Alexander himself on his return from India. This track has been followed by but one European traveller, and he found that, so far apart were the wells, and so foul and brackish, he could get along only by sending caravans ahead to deposit supplies of fodder and water and then return, after which he himself made a dash with a light, fast camel caravan, gathering up and using the caches as he went. Over one of these two routes, utterly impossible today these elephants had to be brought and, once in Persia, they had to be maintained at some base camp, doubtless near the capital city of Susa, whose ruins lie today in the desert valley of the Pasitigris, without so much as a clump of withered camel-thorn to relieve their barrenness.

These facts, and those brought out over and over by the accounts of similar campaigns in this country, provide one of the most striking proofs of the tremendous variations which have taken place in the climate of the whole northern hemisphere in historic times. It is especially striking because we are now at the opposite extreme and

The Ferry-boat on the Great Zab

are suffering from an extremely dry period, while conditions in the southern hemisphere are of course the exact opposite. This fact is quite worthy of attention and of close study, for climatic variations are among the greatest factors in history, and have been the primary causes of all the great human movements.

In the fatal month of September, 331 B.C., a host awaited the Macedonian in the plain that lies beyond the Great Zab, more than a day's journey to the west of Arbela. There a river, which runs into the Zab, and which is known today as the Ghazir Su, served to protect the Persian flank. Alexander had made forced marches from Syria, across the Euphrates, and had reached the Tigris considerably farther north. So he was marching southward when he encountered his enemy, by the road that leads to Babylon.

On that day East was ranged against West on the very threshold of Asia. Alexander's army with its splendid Macedonian phalanxes and its squadrons of irresistible Thessalian cavalry was entirely European, while that of Darius was Asiatic, for the hordes of which it was composed were drawn from the Oxus, the Indus, and the Euphrates. Here at Arbela the elephants and scythed chariots of the East were hurled against the solid walls of Macedonian shields. Those walls were broken, but the battle was won by the impetuous young mountain chief, who struck

the vast hosts of the plains dwellers with his little force of Companions, until he so bewildered them that they fled in terror to the camp at Arbela. Indeed this battle was typical of all the great conflicts between West and East, for it was won by a little group of daring men, each fitted to lead an army, yet working shoulder to shoulder with his companions, so as to form a unit, divisible into any number of responsible parts. Against them was a great mass of humanity, in which the individual was nothing, counted for nothing; a host that was united by the fact of geographical locality, without unity of race, speech, or sentiment; a host that might be moved like a tidal wave upon an enemy and engulf him by sheer force of numbers, but which, once broken, was a mere rabble, without sense or purpose. European civilization has always stood for the development of individual responsibility, while Asia represents the group system and the merging of the individual with the tribe, the race, the empire. This fact gave Alexander his victory, for it mattered not how often his devoted Companion cavalry broke their ranks against some massive tabor of Eastern levies, they always returned to his standard for another charge. And so it was with his phalanxes; though broken and almost buried in the midst of the enemy they continued to fight as individuals until their ranks could be reformed. But with the barbarians it was otherwise. If a leader was slain they fled in terror, if a rank was broken, the

men threw down their arms, for they knew of fighting only with hedges of spears, not with separate points.

When their fleeing groups of terrified men had disappeared down the valley, and Alexander had taken up his position at Arbela, the gate of Asia was in the hands of the conqueror and all of the rich lands of Babylon, of Persia, and of India lay open before him.

After leaving Erbil we rode all day up the valley which was, nearly 2250 years ago, the scene of that wild pursuit in which Alexander's Companion cavalry rode to death more horses than were killed in the battle. As we neared the river Zab it became more rolling, before breaking down to the level plain on which the battle was fought,—the plain of Aturia, better known today as that of Mosul. Again we rode for hours over parallel ridges of equal altitude, like the mountains on the Assyrian reliefs. We could picture here the terrible rout of that vast army of Darius, the fleeing footmen of the King's famous guards, heavy with gold armour and broidered baldrics, the long-haired horse-bowmen of Khorassan, dashing about on their stocky Turkoman ponies, picking up a load of loot from their erstwhile masters preparatory to their long homeward journey to the Caspian steppes, and finally the splendid cavalry of Macedon, in classic armour contrasting forcibly with the fantastic garb of those they had conquered, cutting down the

Persian spearmen, or surprising a party of tribesmen who had stopped in one of the hollows to gather loot from helpless Babylonian infantrymen.

Today there is nothing to be seen in those hollows but occasional flocks of sheep watched over by Kurds whose black tents appear beside the rare, muddy wells. The day was hot and we had been ten days on the road from Bagdad without once tasting cold water. Tea had been our only drink, except occasionally cocoa, and at times it was made with water clear enough to show the bottom of the cup; at such times it was free from any taste but that of tea; more often it not only tasted of the stagnant pool whence the water came but bore other reminders of that unsavoury place in the aroma.

So it was with the keenest delight that we reached the crystal waters of the Great Zab, the river of the Kurds, that rises among the mountains on the Persian frontier and is fed by the melting snows of the mighty Hakkiari hills, now clearly to be seen up its turbulent stream. The waters, fresh with the chill of the snow, offered the most welcome means of satisfying the yearning thirst that had been growing on us during all that desert journey, and we lost no time in discarding our garments and plunging into the limpid depths of a wide eddy.

The bridge that sets out to cross the river on this road is like many of those built by the Turks, and quite characteristic of their incompetency.

It starts out in splendid style, a series of well-built stone arches that span an easily forded backwater. Beyond them a bridge of boats is supposed to lie across the main channel, where the surging current had seemed too formidable to the engineers. But this detail had been neglected and so the bridge was of no use to any one. We splashed across the backwater beside the mass of masonry that so signally fails in its purpose, and then crossed in a ramshackle, box-like ferryboat. The Turk makes a fine showing when the going is easy, but where skill and patience are required, he falls down completely.

Safe across the Zab, another day brought us to the mounds of Nineveh which look across to Mosul. To the right as we rode down once more to the muddy old Tigris lay the palace of Sennacherib, to the left the reputed tomb of Jonah, sacred to Moslem, Jew, and Christian alike. Down among a train of camels we rode on to the handsome stone bridge. A police officer examined our papers, we paid the toll, and set out to cross the Tigris. As with the bridge of yesterday the arches soon gave out and we rode down an incline to the sagging plank roadway of the pontoon bridge that crossed the real channel. What would Saladin have said to this half-hearted way of doing things, the great Saladin, defender of the faith, who at this place turned the very Tigris from its course to prosecute the siege of the city!

So we came to Mosul, and having seen our horses

to a khan, made our way to the British vice-consulate where we were most cordially welcomed by one of our own race, who kindly threw open his dwelling for our comfort.

CHAPTER VII

MOSUL, A CITY OF PRIMITIVE LAWLESSNESS

MOSUL, the modern Nineveh, is a most picturesque city, both in its outward appearance and in its daily life. But beautiful it is not and, though Arab to the core, it cannot boast of any of those scenes that romance associates with Araby the blest. Furthermore it is utterly devoid of any sentiment for municipal beautification, or conception of civic righteousness.

It is a large city, though situated in a very isolated locality, with a population of 80,000 at least. The bulk of these are Shammar Arabs, who took the city in the early days of the spread of Islam, during the seventh century. They are a Bedouin tribe and their people had no idea of living in cities. Consequently those who took up their residence within the walls applied to their new homes the standards of desert life, while their chiefs continued to exercise the absolute power of the nomad patriarch. In this condition they have continued to this day. The citizens have learned the vices of the city and lost the virtues of their former habits of life; their chiefs

have become a ring of tyrannical oppressors, with unchecked power, feared by all and growing fatter and fatter on the labours of the people.

The original inhabitants still retain their national characteristics and religion, which is Christian, though a few have turned to Islam and merged with the Arabs. The Christian population numbers about 20,000 and forms the backbone of the city. Although they claim, without doubt rightly, to be the descendants of the Assyrians, they have adopted the Arabic language, and are in much closer sympathy with their Moslem neighbours than is the rule with their co-religionists elsewhere. As a result, though robbed and murdered and reviled in every direction, they are never massacred. During the recent massacres elsewhere, the Turks proposed bringing in Kurds from outside the city to do the slaughtering, as was done in many other cities, but they were warned by the leading citizens that if they did they would find the Christian and Moslem populations united. The reason for this is that all the industrial work is done by these people, and the Moslem shopkeepers and traders depend on them for supplies of leather goods, cloth, and cigarette-papers, which are the chief products of the city. They are also the builders and serve all over the city as architects, carpenters, and masons, as they were compelled to do at first when their Bedouin conquerors naturally had no idea of those arts. Curiously enough, however, these city builders

do not undertake such work as churches or the more pretentious houses, but leave them to a Christian tribe of mountaineers from the valley of Baz, in the very heart of Kurdistan. This tribe is a sort of hereditary guild that migrates in a body to Mosul each year, and applies to its work secrets that have been in its possession during centuries of architectural experience. They closely resemble the great guild of cathedral builders that gave England its great episcopal edifices, and similar organizations on the Continent, especially in Italy where the mosaic workers went from place to place, generation after generation, laying such floors as those of the Duomo in Siena and Santa Croce.

The houses in Mosul are built of irregular blocks of stone laid in thick mortar. They are usually covered with a white stucco, made by burning the local gypsum rock. The roofs, of the same material as the walls, are usually flat, with a waist-high parapet, but are not infrequently domed. Doorways are often made of slabs of the easily carved gypsum, and are picturesque but perishable. Indeed that quality is characteristic of the whole style of building, for the stucco and mortar quickly crumble, covering the streets with white dust, and so weakening the walls that they buckle and fall.

The streets are narrow and aimless, forming a perfect maze of tangled lanes. As there is no system of sewage whatever, they serve as reposi-

tories for all the filth of the houses that border on them. They are rarely so wide that more than two men can walk abreast and the stench in the narrow sun-traps is well-nigh unbearable at times. Sun-traps they are because of the white walls and white dust that reflect the sun's rays to the maximum extent. As a result of the fine dust, the filth, and the glare, ophthalmia and lung-diseases abound, and flies breed in the open refuse heaps in astonishing numbers. These insects, which we are learning to abhor in the West, are rather petted here and swarm over everything. They cause the button, common also in Aleppo and Bagdad, an ailment resembling a carbuncle, which persists for a period of months, and leaves an ugly scar.

Despite the filth outside, the houses, which turn a blank wall to the streets, are very picturesque. They are on the same plan as those of Bagdad, a plan that is of great antiquity for it is characteristic of the dwellings of ancient Babylonia and Assyria. But the materials here used offer more opportunities for architectural expression than does the uncompromising brick of Bagdad. The court is surrounded by a colonnade fronting both the upper and lower stories. The columns are cut from the soft gypsum and neatly turned, with capitals ornamented in low relief. The lower story has the cook's sanctum on one side, the servants' quarters on another, and on the others *serdabs*, the heavy basements whither the

Burning Gypsum for Plaster outside the Wall of Mosul

family retire in hot weather. The ordinary living-rooms open upon the upper gallery, with doors and windows fitted with stone lintels carved with arabesques. The roof above is an excellent vantage ground from which to shoot at one's enemy in the street below, and affords a comfortable sleeping-place in hot weather, when the upper rooms are scorching with the heat stored up during the day in the porous walls. On the side of the court that is toward Mecca there is often a sort of apse, a lofty niche, two stories in height, usually carved and painted. It serves the same purpose as the iconostasis in a Russian dwelling, and toward it the family face at the hours of prayer.

The house in which we stayed was not so provided, for it was originally a Jacobite Christian monastery and for some time has been leased from the brotherhood by succeeding British consuls. We lived in the part formerly used as cells and refectory by the monks, while the other half, the chapel, is still used as a church. Instead of the niche toward Mecca, a cross was carved upon every lintel, and a Christian text appeared over the well, which was on one side of the court.

Besides the small rooms occupied as bedrooms, dining-room, and study, there is over the main entrance a large room with a bay-window looking out toward the Tigris, used as a reception room. This was charmingly fitted up with Oriental rugs and hangings by our host, and not by the govern-

ment as is usual in consulates. We were told that a former consul had the honour to apply, respectfully and in due form, for funds for such a purpose, and had the honour to be, etc. This request met with a curt refusal, which was explained by the statement that his guests would be only a few old sea captains, for whom such extravagance would be quite unwarranted. Imagine old sea captains appearing in a city hundreds of miles from any sea, on a river navigated only by a few goatskin rafts that float down on the current from Diyarbekr!

In a corner of the court stands the flagstaff from which the consul is accustomed to flaunt the cross of St. George—who by the way is the patron saint of the local Christians—in the very face of the subjects of the Sultan. It occurred to certain followers of the true Prophet that this cross was raised to a greater height than the crescent which surmounts the dome of a nearby tomb, that of the saint and descendant of the Prophet, Seyyid Kasim. When this fact was noised abroad a leader was found in the person of a fanatical dervish, and an attack in force was made on the consulate. Not until help arrived from the Vali, whose residence, with the barracks of the troops, is on the other side of the city, could the consul consider himself safe. Of course the flag was not taken down, but it may be interesting to note that the tomb is rapidly falling into ruin. Part of its garden wall

has already toppled into the Tigris, which continues to undermine the bank, so the dome will soon follow suit. When this happens it will be taken as proof that Kasim objects to the flaunting of that flag. Meanwhile it occurs to no one to seek to preserve the sacred edifice, for that would be working against the manifest will of Allah.

The consulate stands just within the north wall but well without the city itself, for this whole section was abandoned some time ago after a desolating visit of the plague. This space is a wilderness of ruined walls and graves, mounds that once were blocks of houses, separated by gullies that were streets. Occasionally there is a garden, of alfalfa perhaps, or cucumbers, watered by a ditch filled from the river by a water-wheel. Each is protected by a watchman who lives in a hut of brush, covered with a ragged piece of tent cloth which rather adds to the general appearance of desolation: for it is such a "lodge in a garden of cucumbers" as Isaiah mentions as the very type of dilapidation. This is a famous place in which to commit murders, and indeed a man was shot there almost before our eyes. We watched the hue and cry that followed the murderer; but he was soon swallowed up by the city and lost among its devious ways—quite the usual thing in Mosul.

The wall that once surrounded the city is picturesque but dilapidated. Part of it is imposing, with battlements and towers, but much has fallen into ruin. This process is assisted both by

the citizens and the government officials, who covet its stones for other uses. Just behind the consulate is a picturesque, low-arched gateway, a sort of postern in a long stretch of excellent wall. Because of its isolation it has but a small guard, and, for the reason that a small guard is easier to bribe than a large one, it is a favourite place for tobacco smugglers to enter the city. This is, of course, done at night when all is pitch dark, there being no lights save the dim lanterns of the watch, that serve rather to blind those that hold them than to afford any light. The smugglers announce their coming with a furious fusillade. Then they proceed to "force" their way through the gate despite the gallant (?) resistance of the guards, who discharge their rifles into the air, with the noise of a pitched battle. As the animals pass the gate, their masters pay a *mejid* (eighty cents) a load and go on, by ways best known to themselves, into the city. The duty would be several pounds, a loss which is made up for next morning by an elaborate report, whereupon the Hukumet (government) pays for the ammunition. A stray bullet frequently hits the consulate.

Many entertaining stories are told of these tobacco smugglers, one of which I shall venture to repeat. It must be understood that the tobacco monopoly in Turkey is farmed out to a company called the "Regie," which has the sole right of manufacturing and selling that valuable commodity, which it handles at great profit both to itself

and the Hukumet. It has its own force of inspectors, guards, and police.

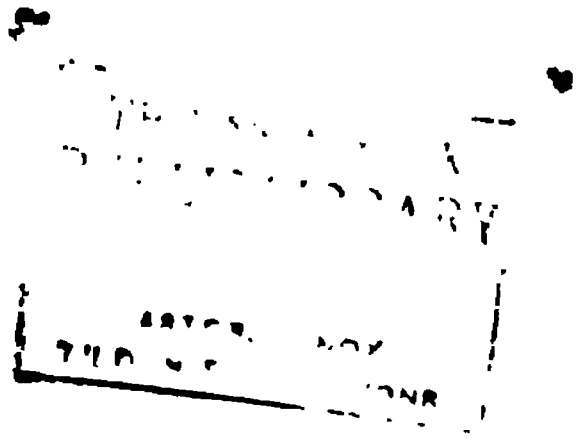
It is with the latter my story has to deal, for they attacked a caravan, belonging to the leading smuggler of the city, as it was passing through the streets. In the skirmish a policeman was killed, a fact that could not be overlooked, even by the authorities, who were accustomed to receive their cigarettes from the great smuggler, without charge and without the stamp of the Regie. It happened that the fatal bullet was of a peculiar type that fitted only one rifle in the city, a rifle that belonged to the great smuggler, who never allowed it out of his reach. Furthermore there were those who had seen its owner upon a roof that overlooked the scene of the fracas. Under such provocation that personage had to be arrested. But in durance vile he was not kept, for he sat at the door of a coffee-house without the city gaol, whence he set his friends and adherents to hustle those who came to make complaint against him.

At the trial it was held that the policeman was guilty of contributory negligence, having gotten in the way of a bullet that was going about its business in the open street, as it had a perfect right to do. Are not the streets free to all? As for the evidence regarding the bullet and the man seen on the roof, it was ruled out, for these matters were the private affairs of the gentleman at the bar, and it was not right that they should be pried into.

The bazaars of Mosul are poor and dirty, rarely roofed, and furnished only with the commonest wares. The shopkeepers are generally Christians, but there are many Arabs, and all wear the long tunic, *aba*, and *egal* of that race. Garden produce is often sold in the squares in open market, and at any time venders may be seen squatting in the streets with eggs or cucumbers in a basket, while the mosque court-yards are favourite places for sweetmeats sellers who display "Turkish delight" on scalloped copper trays. These street venders are often Kurds and wear one of the tribal costumes of that race, or something between it and the Arab habit. All butchers are necessarily Moslem, for no follower of that faith will purchase flesh of an unbeliever. Many of the greengrocers also are Mohammedans, as are the potters. But nearly all the drapers, venders of dry-goods, hardware, and leather goods, and all the artisans, are Christian, with the exception of a few Jews. Of the latter there are about 5000 in Mosul, but they are not progressive and have dropped their language and adopted Arab dress. Though practically without any schools until the last decade they have held to their religion with characteristic tenacity. They always close their shops on Saturday, as do the Moslems on Friday and the Christians on Sunday, an arrangement that rather expedites matters, for some shops are thus always open.

The bazaars radiate from a picturesque square,

A Fountain of Ablution in the Principal Friday Mosque of Mosul



quite near the bridge, which is the centre of the town. To the south and south-west are the drapers, shoemakers, and harness-makers; to the north-west are the streets of the butchers and greengrocers; while the potters and dealers in hardware are to be found in narrow stalls opening on a street that runs to the north. Above them rises a half-ruined mosque with a massive minaret of picturesquely patterned brickwork. Like all the minarets of this ramshackle city it leans precariously and is kept from overtopping itself by a kink, the upper part leaning at quite a different angle from the lower—the builders evidently thought two wrongs would make a right. The squat dome beside it was occupied by the nest of a very superior stork, that looked down in a shocked way from time to time upon the clamour of the streets below.

The square itself is a meeting-place of caravans, whose owners sit on the second-storey gallery of a coffee-shop, while the muleteers stroll about the crowded place with cigarettes in their mouths, or lounge among bales covered with brown and white striped sackcloth. These men are almost always Kurds, those from the southern and eastern tribes dressed in tunic, zouave jacket, and turban as I have elsewhere described. But more picturesque than these are the northern Kurds, of the Hakkiari tribes. They are broad-shouldered, big-chested, pleasant-faced men, with flashing eyes and an energetic air, stepping out freely, and al-

ways jesting. They are strikingly different from the slouching, vagrant-eyed, ugly, vicious Arabs of the city, who are excitable but cowardly, and bear all the earmarks of idleness and cunning. These men of the north are picturesque in dress also. They wear baggy trousers reaching to the feet, which are covered with brogues of heavy hemp or rawhide. A jacket to match the trousers is held in place by a coloured sash, and may be covered, in cold weather, by a short sleeveless vest of goatskin, with the shaggy side out. On their heads they wear a hat of heavy felt, usually dome-shaped, with a scarf tied jauntily around it. This costume emphasizes the broad, stocky build of these men of Hakkiari, and sets them apart instantly as of a different race from the slender Arabs. We took great interest in these men for it was into their country that we were planning to travel.

Near the square are coffee-houses, frequented by lazy Moslems who live off the labours of their poorer neighbours and the Christian tradesmen, and also by the equally parasitic officers of the garrison. There is too an auction market, a narrow square where dickering is always going on over something, in the midst of an excited, shouting, fighting crowd.

The principal mosque of the city is in this neighbourhood, and can be found by the stranger only with the help of a guide, so devious are the ways that lead to it, although it can be seen from

many points in the bazaar. It is the best built Mohammedan building in Mosul, for its walls and arched porches are chiefly of cut stone, and it is provided with a minaret of the same material, properly laid in perfectly regular courses. It is not beautiful however nor is it decorated like those of Bagdad. The entrance is through a porch faced by a graceful Saracenic colonnade, in very good repair for Turkey, and quite picturesque. In the centre of the broad, flagged court stands a now disused fountain of ablution, supported by a handsome old canopy. It is composed of a hexagonal roof of very mean workmanship—probably a rude restoration—supported by six beautifully carved arches of the local gypsum rock, white in colour with pale green marblings. The hexagonal columns are of the same material, which is weathered just enough to give an air of antiquity to the whole. I tried to find someone who could tell me something of this really beautiful piece of work, but beyond the statement that it was very old—a fact plainly to be seen by any one—I could gather nothing.

From the bazaars a gate surmounted by a massive square tower leads down to the waterside, and beyond it is the city lumber-yard. Now the mention of a lumber-yard presents to the Western mind a picture of neat piles of boards in a great enclosure, with a sawmill at one side whence comes the hum of sawing and the clatter of newly cut boards. But in Mosul there is no such sight.

Situated in the midst of a treeless region, with no source of supply or means of transportation save the Tigris, the city depends almost entirely on the wood used for the frames of the *keleks*, the skin rafts, on which merchandise and passengers are floated down from Diyarbekr. These frames are made of light poles, rarely more than three inches in diameter, almost invariably of poplar. They are weathered black and split from having been water-logged and then exposed to the dry air, and piled on end in this lumber-yard by the Tigris. They are used for roofing and flooring, but practically nothing else. The wood for doors and window frames comes from the board floors built on the rafts that carry passengers. Above this desolate wood-yard with its piles of dirty, black, crooked poles rises a half-ruined minaret, on the balcony of which a stork has built her nest, of the sticks and withes with which the rafts were held together.

This city of Mosul has the reputation of being the most turbulent in Turkey and we heard many echoes of the riots of 1909, during which the government forces were entirely withdrawn and the place was left in the hands of the neighbouring landholders. These Arab begs rule the city at all times by means of paid bravos, who are always ready for any form of deviltry, and when not employed as assassins, make things go by systematic burglary or smuggling. Occasionally they go too far and have to take up their residence

for a short time in the jail. It is told of one such gang that, while kept in jail all day, they were free to ply their trade at night; the results of which were of course shared with the chief warden.

The trouble of 1909 grew out of the disturbed state of affairs that obtained during the revolution in Constantinople, but it was directly caused by the jealousies that exist between the people of Mosul and their Kurdish and Turkish neighbours. There was actually a blood feud at one time with Suleimanieh on the Persian frontier, and it was certain death for an inhabitant of one town to appear in the neighbourhood of the other. But Kerkuk is the traditional enemy of Mosul, and the Turks have been accustomed to back their authority with a mounted battalion from that city. On January 2d trouble began between its *sowars* (troopers) and the citizens. Things got so bad that one of the former insulted a Moslem woman, a most unusual thing. The Arabs quickly killed the guilty man but the Kerkuklis ran amuck and attacked other women before they could get to shelter. No more deadly insult could have been perpetrated and by it the *sowars* brought the whole population about their ears, and every native of Kerkuk that could not get out of the city was soon hunted down and killed. Meanwhile the authorities did nothing, for the Vali did not know how he stood at Constantinople, and feared to do anything lest it

make his position worse—a typical attitude of the Turkish official.

On the second day of the disturbance, the *sowars* were driven back to their barracks where they were besieged without food. After a few days they threw themselves on the mercy of the Vali, and to him came also the mob demanding vengeance. Then occurred the most dramatic incident in the whole affair. Opposite the very windows of the Vali lived one of the holiest men in Turkey, Sheikh Seyyid of Suleimanieh, intimate of the Sultan, instigator of massacres, tyrant of a large province on the Persian frontier, but of Kurdish race, and therefore anathema to every good Mosuli. Against his house the anger of the mob was directed and they soon had almost effected an entrance. But their work was stopped by the appearance of the white-bearded old man himself. Finding his position in the house quite defenceless he had decided, with the courage of his race, to defy the danger and trust to his reputation for sanctity to pass the mob. In his gorgeous priestly robes, bedecked with priceless pearls, gifts of Abdul-Hamid himself, and bearing in his hand the sacred Koran, he set out across the street to the gate of the serai, whence the Vali, whose duty it was to defend him, watched from an upper window.

At first the crowd drew back and a dead silence fell on the street. With a steady step and unmoved face the old man moved down the lane that

The Bridge across the Tigris at Mosul. In the Background the Mound on which is the Reputed Tomb of Jonah

opened as he advanced straight toward the door of the serai. When he had half crossed the street someone in the crowd shouted a vile epithet, and that was sufficient to break the spell. The mob surged toward its victim; those nearest to him raised their weapons and struck; others pushed in and stabbed and hacked until the body of the brave old priest was torn to bits. This holy sheikh, whose prayers had, it is said, saved the life of one of Abdul-Hamid's children, was murdered before the eyes of the trembling, invertebrate Vali, who represented the powers that were supposed to be. Meanwhile the crowd poured into their victim's house and killed seventeen of his sons—the rest were safe in Kerkuk, and afterwards succeeded their father in power at Suleimanieh.

No greater defiance than this could have been offered the government of the Sultan, who, though soon to be deposed, was still all-powerful. Knowing they could expect no forgiveness the people went wild and a reign of terror began, during which every possible insult was offered the Hukumet, and its prestige was sadly dragged in the dust. I have already stated that the dust of Mosul is very foul.

This series of incidents so roused the central government that, in course of time, they sent a real man to Mosul as Vali, one Tahir Pasha, an Albanian, whose son we later became intimate with on the Persian frontier. This man Tahir

took things in hand, and would allow no one to dictate to him, nor would he ever fail to carry out a threat, or make a promise he could not keep. He was an honest man and took no bribes—unless they were very large—for he had made his fortune in a former position and did not have to. One thing that he accomplished, that had never been heard of before in Mosul, was the execution of a man by due process of law. A Christian was killed by a co-religionist of a different sect, on account of religious differences, and a most shocking murder it was. The slayer was condemned to death, but nobody thought much of that, for many are the ways of getting around such a sentence. But in this case they all failed, even when the prisoner offered to turn Moslem. The day came, but the executioner refused to do his duty, saying he had never done such a thing as cut a man's head off and did not know how. So volunteers were called for and one was secured. Now according to the law he had to cut that head off with one blow or go to jail for five years. So off came the head at the first blow.

The body and head were carried off by the man's relatives and buried. When decomposition had set in, a phosphorescent light appeared above the grave, a well-known and quite common phenomenon in this dry climate. "Behold," said the bishop of the sect to which the criminal belonged, "this man is a saint and a martyr, for the angels light his grave by night."

There is in Mosul an English mission with a school for Christian children and a medical doctor. This man affords the only surgical or medical assistance that is available in the city. True there is a military hospital, which has been thrown open to the citizens because the soldiers could not be got to use it. When we were there it had had six patients. Their experiences are eloquently set forth in the pages of the hospital record book. Each of these is divided into four columns, headed, "Received," "Cured," "Died," "Ran Away." In the first column were six names, in the second none, in the third two, and in the fourth four. The surgeon in charge was very conscientious about sterilizing his instruments, which he did regularly, removing them from the boiling water and wiping them carefully with a dirty rag, that had once done duty as an undershirt.

Besides his work in the city the English doctor is frequently called on by the neighbouring Kurds, and spends a part of each summer travelling among them. He told us that the rule in administering medicines is to give five times the regular dose to a Kurd, and three times to an Assyrian. This sounds rather startling but is readily comprehensible to one who knows the former race. According to our informant it is almost impossible to poison one at all, and even if you succeed it doesn't much matter. But the Oriental is always suspicious and one prominent sheikh, who sent for the doctor to treat his eyes, which were afflicted

with trachoma, demanded that he try the proposed operation on a bystander, who was quite free from any trouble. Unfortunately the good doctor is a mild man and did not see the joke, but administered less drastic treatment, else I might have had a better story to tell. He told us also of some interesting native treatments, especially of bullet wounds, which are commonly plugged with a mixture of cow-dung and butter, stirred together with a stick.

But treatment *à la Franga* is gradually coming in in Kurdistan, as indicated by an experience our host the consul had with a Kurdish chief. This gentleman, professing love for all Britons and British consuls in particular, sent him, on his arrival, a goatskin full of cheese. Presuming upon the favour thus secured he sent later a request for what were, to him, the prime necessities of life. There were two items: (1) cartridges for such and such a revolver; (2) medicine for wounds.

Our friend the consul had a rather thrilling experience shortly before we arrived, while travelling in the heart of the mountains. He was journeying up by Julamerk to the Christian centre of Kudshanis, and stopped one night in a Kurdish town. When he rose in the morning to leave he found that the sacred rights of hospitality had been violated and certain of his goods unostentatiously segregated. He called upon the Agha, the local chief, to return them, and was

rebuffed. So he decided to take something as surety, and hit upon the thing a Kurd most values, his rifle. Some of these fell into the consul's hands and he set out with them, saying he would return them when his missing packs were given up.

Some distance from the town the consul and his *kavass*, a brave young Turk from Constantinople, were riding ahead and fell into ambush. A large party of Kurds stepped from behind rocks and demanded their arms. One of them began to wrestle with the *kavass* in an effort to take away the British army rifle he carried. It got to be quite a fracas and the consul, being peaceably inclined, ordered his man to make no further resistance. So the Kurd got the rifle, and being excited by his struggle, tried to shoot the consul with it. He drew back the bolt, shot it into place again, pointed the arm at the consul, and pulled the trigger. But this rifle has a lever which locks the cartridges in the magazine, when it is desired to do so, and this lever was thrown in. So the rifle simply snapped, much to the amazement of the Kurd, who set to work to set it right, encouraged by the bystanders, who appreciated the humour involved in shooting a man with his own rifle.

About this time the consul had had enough, and he and the *kavass* drew their pistols and the shooting began. It was two men against a score and when the pistols were empty there was nothing

for them to do but to wheel their horses and dash up the rocky slope down which they had come, with bullets splitting on the rocks all around them. They succeeded in reaching Kudshanis in safety, where they were among Christian Assyrians, deadly enemies of the Kurds.

But before he left the field of battle the consul had killed the chief of his assailants, and they began to swarm around for vengeance. For six weeks the Englishman was cooped up in that mountain town, and finally got away by simply announcing to the Kaimakam of Julamerk that he was going on a certain day and if he was killed his blood would be on that gentleman's head. As a result of this threat eight *zaptiehs* were sent him as a guard. One of these proved to be a near relative of the dead man, and he tried his best to get the party into the hands of the avengers. But the consul kept up a rapid pace, travelled by a different route than the one usually taken, and got by in safety, and so came to Julamerk, where the Kaimakam had to protect him.

But the fun was by no means over, for his friends dogged his steps all the way to the very plain of Mosul; and he could travel only with a strong guard of *zaptiehs*. With this force he came to Amadia where some of his compatriots, a group of missionaries, were practically besieged by another tribe of Kurds. They had a quarrel in satisfaction of which they claimed the blood of an

The East End of the Bridge across the Tigris at Mosul

Englishman and eight *zaptiehs*. I am glad to say they did not get it.

The Kurds demanded five hundred Turkish pounds for their dead chief, which is ten times the usual price—consuls usually have to pay only from two to four times. The embassy wished to settle the question and ordered the consul to pay with official funds. But our good friend was not to be dragooned in that way, and objected so violently to admitting he was in the wrong that he said he would resign before he paid, with King George's money or anybody else's. And there the matter stood when the story was told to us.

Listening to such tales passed the time very quickly at Mosul, and we found it hard to make our preparations to leave. But it was to travel among such people as these very Kurds that we were preparing, and we knew we had much to look forward to. So in the reception room of the consulate, with murder at our front door and bribery at our back, we signed our contract with the muleteers who were to take us into the really lawless country to the north.

Opposite Mosul, across the composite bridge, are the last vestiges of Nineveh, capital of the second of the world's great empires. The great walls of the ancient city are still to be traced in places, built of tremendous masses of sun-dried brick laid on a high broad wall of cut stone. The city was further protected by a moat into which the waters of a small river could be con-

ducted. This is also plain enough today, for it was hewn to a depth of twenty feet and was fifty yards in width.

Two mighty mounds, situated a mile to the east of the river and rather more than that distance apart, contain the principal ruins. The more northerly is called Koyunjik, the Shambles, because here, a party of Yezidis, fleeing from Kurdish persecution to take refuge in the city, were cut off by the then unbridged river, were overtaken, and slaughtered.

In this mound Layard found the remains of Sennacherib's palace, built about 700 B.C., and carried away to the British Museum its finest trophies of Assyrian art. He was followed by the equally thorough Professor King, who has left nothing to be seen of the old palace but dust and a single broken bas-relief, destined no doubt to be used for mortar before long. Such at least was the fate of one of the splendid winged bulls left behind by Layard. After its head had been used to repair a mill, the vali is said to have sold it for a *mejid* (eighty cents), to be broken up for lime.

The palace once stood on the bank of the Tigris, which made it an impenetrable fortress on that side. But the river that had protected the city for generations was destined to cause its downfall, as ancient prophecy had predicted. This takes us back to 608 B.C., when King Sardanapalus was defending the last vestiges of

Assyrian power against the growing empires of Media and Babylonia. The allied armies, under Cyaxares and Nabopolassar, had already invested his capital, when a terrible flood poured down from the snowclad mountains, clearly visible in the north. So unusual was the force of the raging current that it undermined both banks, forming great breaches in the city wall, and cutting many channels to the west. When the flood was over, it was in one of these new channels that the river flowed, leaving the breached walls hopelessly unprotected.

The walls of that gorgeous palace of Sennacherib had more than once been adorned with newly flayed skins, ripped from the living bodies of Median and Babylonian kings, and Sardanapalus himself had cruelly tortured all those unfortunates that had fallen into his hands. He therefore knew that scant pity would be shown him when the allied armies penetrated his city. So he ordered his ancestral palace to be fired and he perished with all his wives and children in one terrible holocaust.

Seventy-five years before that time Esarhaddon, Sennacherib's son, ruled Assyria. The nation was then at the very height of her glory. Her King, unlike his father, was averse to cruelty, and inclined to patronize art. He rebuilt Babylon which his father had laid waste, and spent much time in that historic city.

After setting himself firmly on his throne by defeating the army of his brothers, and restoring

peace to the Empire by successful expeditions into Media, Arabia, and Syria, he decided to build a palace in Nineveh, and sent word to all his vassals to come to that place to do him homage. Twenty-two kings answered the summons, ten from the island of Cyprus, and twelve from the Syrian kingdoms, the latter headed by Baal of Tyre, and Manasseh of Judah. To assist their liege lord in his building they brought presents. From Lebanon came "great beams and rafters of ebony, cedar, and cypress," and there were slabs of alabaster, "brought with labour and difficulty unto Nineveh for the adornment of the palace." A careful record was made of all the gifts, and a cylinder has been found giving a long account of the magnificent fittings and appointments of the palace.

All of this splendid palace is hidden under the southern mound, which has been jealously guarded by Turk and native, because its summit is crowned by a village, in which is the reputed tomb of Nibi Yunis, the Prophet Jonah. "If," say the pious Moslems, "you disturb the tomb of the prophet, he will be angry and we shall suffer. Our crops will fail for lack of rain and our cattle perish from murrains."

Now we know that Jonah was a man of uncertain temper, and if his tomb were really there, we might take some stock in what is thus commonly said. But we also know that Jonah's prophecy was not fulfilled, so the last place we might expect

to find his tomb is on the very summit of Nineveh's ruins.

As a matter of fact, we know that the mosque of Nibi Yunis was originally a Nestorian church, dating from the days of the Kalifate, when that body of Christians had an independent Patriarch at Mosul. The tomb it contains is of one of the last to hold that office, Mar John the Lame, who died in the thirteenth century. Life was doubtless hard for the good saint during his lifetime, and it is doubtless not without a touch of irony that he receives the pious prayers of the Moslem descendants of those who persecuted him centuries ago. But the tradition has taken no uncertain root in the minds of all the inhabitants of Mosul, and the tomb of Mar John comes in for equal respect from Christians and Jews, as well as from Moslems.

Meanwhile the finest of all Assyrian palaces lies buried beneath a miserable Turkish village. Only one object has ever been unearthed so far as we know, a pair of bronze oxen, found in the bottom of the mosque well. These effigies of living things, anathema to the fierce monotheism of the modern Semitic world, were promptly melted down, and now adorn the windows of a Mosul house in the form of gratings.

Some day let us hope the power of superstition will be sufficiently broken to allow an exploration of the wonders of what is now Turkey's most valuable hidden treasure.

CHAPTER VIII

"THE PEOPLE OF THE MOUNTAINS"

KURDISTAN is a name of no very definite meaning, for, though a geographical term, it has no accurate territorial application. Roughly it is applied to the Zagros Mountains, that lie between the basins of the great salt lakes of Van and Urmi and the plains of Mesopotamia. On account of their ruggedness and impenetrability these highlands have ever been a most important ethnic boundary, separating not only empires, but races. It is a significant fact that no Semitic power has ever permanently conquered the valleys beyond them. Nor has any invading army ever entered the Tigris-Euphrates basin—the home of the Semites—from the other side of their massive wall, although time after time invading hordes have passed into Asia Minor through the valleys of Armenia.

At the dawn of history we find two great empires growing up, one after the other, on each side of the Zagros. The first of these was Assyria, a Semitic empire, centring about the great plain of Nineveh. Under such kings as Tiglath-Pileser I. (1100 B.C.),

Shalmaneser II. (860), and the Sargonids—Sargon (722) to Asshurbanipal (668)—they spread their kingdom all over the great basin south of the mountains, from Chaldæa to Egypt. In 606 their capital city of Nineveh fell before the Babylonians, who were soon succeeded by the Persians, who came from the East. These in turn yielded to the Macedonians who came from the West, who were followed by Roman, Parthian, and Byzantine. Then came the Sassanid Persians from the East (260 A.D.), inaugurating a long series of wars over the possession of what had originally been the heart of Assyria. Fleeing from these conflicts many of the people of that land retired into the mountains, taking with them the religion of their Western conquerors which had by that time spread all over the Near East.

This Christian connection kept them in communication with the cities, especially Nineveh or Mosul, which were the residences of the higher clergy. So when the Mohammedan invasion began in the seventh century there remained a close sympathy between the Assyrians of the mountains and those of the plains, and many of the latter joined their fellows, seeking freedom from religious persecution. Among these was the Patriarch (or Archbishop) of Mosul, who fled to the very heart of Kurdistan, and whose descendant remains today the spiritual head of the mountain Assyrians.

Although these people belong to the older empire they were not the earlier occupants of the moun-

tains. When such powerful kings as Tiglath-Pileser I. and Asshurbanipal penetrated the mountains to Lake Van, they had to fight their way through fierce tribes of mountaineers whom they called Nairi. They were small independent clans, attacking all who dared penetrate their country and fleeing "like birds" into the inmost recesses of their hills when attacked by a superior force. These people were never subdued nor were their relatives beyond the Zagros conquered. Finally a number of these tribes were brought together, and under the powerful Cyaxares was formed the Median empire, with its capital at Hamadan (Ecbatana), including what is now western Persia and spreading as far as Asia Minor. In a short time this empire was broken up by a closely related group of tribes farther south, the Persians. Under Cyrus the Great most of the Median tribes were united with the Persians, but others remained in their mountain strongholds, and others returned to their old homes after following Cyrus and Darius in their careers of conquest.

Because of the repeated invasions of their centre, the Urmi basin, most of the Median tribes have had to take refuge in the mountains, but there are still many in Persia, south of Lake Urmi and in the district of Kermanshah. Today they are called Kurds, a name that is so old that we cannot clearly trace its origin, and have given their name to the country of the Zagros, Kurdistan—the land of the Kurds.

These mountaineers were never really Christianized although not a few tribes professed that religion to some extent. Consequently they offered fertile ground for the spread of the more vigorous teachings of Mohammed, and the whole race today professes Islam. They are essentially an Aryan people and speak a distinct language—not merely a dialect of Persian as has often been stated—divided into several nearly related dialects. Unfortunately it has been little studied, but those who know it agree that it is a complete tongue, having rich grammatical forms and a distinct syntax, and that it is quite free from Semitic words such as have been adopted into Persian, enriching it, but replacing older Aryan forms. It is a harsher, more rugged language than Persian, which is generally admitted to be the most euphonious of Aryan tongues. The Mukri Kurds who inhabit Suj Bulak, south of Urmi, and neighbouring parts of Persian Kurdistan, are credited with speaking the purest Kurdish, or Kermanji as it is also called. But wide dialectic variation exists on account of the tribal differences, the inaccessible nature of the lands of some tribes, and the lack of any widespread literature.

It has often been said that there was no literature at all, and no written language. As a matter of fact this is grossly unfair. Not long ago, and as early as the sixteenth century, there was a college and school of philosophy at Bayazid, in the shadow

of Mt. Ararat, where the students were Kurds and their language the chief subject of study. Its founder, Ahmed Khan, left several works of history, philosophy, and poetry. Suleimanieh also has been a Kurdish literary centre famous for its poets, who have left voluminous works largely in the Persian style. There is, besides, further written material, a great body of folk-lore, chiefly poetical, which may be heard in any town or village at night. I have often listened with pleasure to the merry songs of the wildest of the mountaineers, and the translations I have seen have shown them to be so full of feeling and beauty, and so rich in figure and mythological allusions, as really to be worthy to rank with the most finished Persian poetry as an expression of the national taste.

The Kurdish character has been much maligned. The people have been described over and over as abandoned scoundrels, barbarians of the most rapacious descriptions, savages to whom blood-letting is a pastime, and all manner of brutality a matter of daily custom. A Persian writer describes their nature in the words: "Shedders of blood, raisers of strife, seekers after turmoil and uproar, robbers and brigands." But he has to admit later that they are "a brave race, fearless, of a hospitality grateful to the soul, in truth and honor unequalled, of pleasing countenance and fair cheek." This is really a very good summing up of their character. The former characteristics are the ones that get out and are repeated, the

latter are manifest only to those who journey among them.

Most of the Kurds whose acquaintance we made were most kindly in their treatment of us, hospitable to a degree, always jolly, generous, and so little inclined to theft or covetousness as often to refuse gifts offered in return for food or lodging. They are noted for a faithfulness to all obligations, an affection for near relatives which is rare in the East, where fratricide has always been common, a manlier treatment of women than that of any other Moslem people, a willingness to sacrifice personal interests for those of the tribe, and an admirable pride of race which shows itself in a frank and open bearing. Although professors of Islam, polygamy is unheard of, prostitution does not exist, and adultery is instantly punished by death. The women do not share the restrictions imposed upon their more civilized sisters among the Arabs and Persians. They are never veiled but go about as freely as the men, except that in the larger towns they do not go to the bazaar, but leave the marketing to the male members of their household. Like the men they are cheerful, hard-working, and blessed with a sturdy upright carriage.

However it cannot be denied that the Kurdish character leaves much to be desired, especially in the north. With those not of his own race, the Kurd is tyrannical and cruel. Brigandage is often his chief means of livelihood, and that never was an

occupation calculated to improve character. The tribes on the frontier especially have developed a great reputation for duplicity, adopting many clever stratagems to escape the wrath of the governments whose borders they alternately ravish. This life, to which, it must in fairness be admitted, most of them have been driven by the tyranny of the very governments they now plunder, has weaned them from the steady habits of the cultivator, and led them to depend mostly upon horse and rifle, plot and counterplot, to wrest a living from their neighbours. But however cruel and unscrupulous they may become, these professional robbers are always generous and hospitable to those they look upon as friends.

Quick-tempered the Kurd undoubtedly is, prone to draw his knife, and not infrequently led to use it. His keen sense of humour fortunately tempers this quality. I have seen two men face each other with drawn weapons, who, a moment before, had been dancing together, and then burst out into guffaws of laughter at the remark of a bystander, replacing their knives in perfect amity.

Toughness and an unusual tenacity of life are characteristic of most mountaineers, and of Kurds as much as any others. An ordinary dose of medicine will do them no good and they can survive an overdose that would kill several Europeans. An English missionary tells of finding in a mountain village a Kurd who seemed to be at death's door. He had applied to a Christian

neighbour who claimed to be a *hakim*, a physician, on the strength of a few weeks' experience in an American mission dispensary. Inquiry revealed that this gentleman had administered croton oil, "not much; only a teaspoonful." Now half a minim is the maximum dose in the West, and a Kurd might be expected to survive several times as much. That he could survive a teaspoonful no one could be expected to believe. But he did.

The amount of lead that these fellows can carry off is remarkable. I have seen scars on the head and shoulders of some of them from wounds that it would seem must have proved fatal to any one really human. A story is told in the mountains of a man who was shot through the body in a tribal skirmish. He came home to his wife and complained that he had gotten two new holes in his shirt, and would have to have it washed besides.

It is not to be wondered at that many secure a reputation for being proof against shot and steel. A British vice-consul at Van made a great name for himself several years ago when he succeeded in killing one of these men, who was leading an attack against him. He shot him twice in the head and also through both lungs, but the man lived for five days, although any one of the three wounds should have been almost instantly fatal by all rules of precedent.

Great differences exist among the Kurds according to their mode of life. The least admirable and least known are the purely nomadic tribes who live

always in black tents of coarse goat's hair, and pasture their sheep in the plains in winter and in the higher valleys and their neighbouring slopes in summer. These people are at constant war with those whose valleys they pass through and with the government, whose agents hold them up yearly in true highwayman style to "lift" the *aghnam*, or sheep tax, together with such perquisites as the tax-gatherers may have force enough to exact. Consequently their hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them. The sedentary Kurds of the mountain villages are the best lot in my experience, for they are not professional plunderers like their kinsmen on the Persian frontier, though they often do indulge in razzias against their neighbours, especially the Christians. The bandit tribes on the frontier are the most tyrannous and the most hospitable, the cruellest, but the proudest and most generous. They should not be judged by the standards of today, but by those of the Middle Ages. Their code of ethics is that of a Scottish borderer, or a Rhenish robber baron.

As recently as the last quarter of the past century there were many powerful Kurdish chiefs who were practically independent and paid no tribute to the Hukumet, the Turkish Government. This state of affairs was done away with in Turkey by Abdul-Hamid, the great centralizer. One of the means he adopted to accomplish his end was the formation of the Kurds into irregular cavalry

brigades called after his own name Hamidie. These could be conveniently used against each other, against the Christians whom Abdul-Hamid always feared, or as a bulwark in case of aggression on the part of Russia or Persia. To make them effective excellent rifles were poured into their country and eagerly snapped up by the tribesmen, who are now almost universally provided with breech-loading rifles. German Mausers are commonest in the north, but Martinis and Snyders are to be seen commonly in the south, where the former pattern is often imitated by the native gunsmiths. The taxes are regularly exacted from the more powerful clans in the form of tribute, a tribe that dares to refuse being coerced by its neighbours acting in conjunction with Turkish troops, all of whom have to have a share of the spoil. This method is shockingly wasteful, but not nearly so much so as the system of making the Christians bear the principal burden of taxation, one of the worst results of the Hamidian policies.

The Christians are mostly cultivators and suffer greatly from the united oppression of the Kurds and the Hukumet. They are members of the Eastern Church which once spread all over Asiatic Turkey and Persia, and sent missionaries to India and China. This church was split up by the desire of various national bodies, as the Armenians, Syrians, and Egyptians, to throw off the spiritual domination of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

These bodies adopted any heresy that was convenient, not for doctrinal reasons, but as a protest against Greek oppression. When the Moslem invasion began they welcomed Mohammedan rule as a means of freeing themselves from the persecution of their fellow-Christians, and when the Turk came he adopted the Arab plan of recognizing these Christian bodies as subject millets, allowing each its own clergy, under a Patriarch who was and is responsible directly to the Sultan. Multiplication of these millets is rather encouraged than otherwise, on the principle that the smaller the body the weaker it is.

As a result we have in Kurdistan today four distinct Syrian churches, not to mention Syrian Protestants, evangelized by English and American missionaries. Up in the high valleys, north and east of Mosul, is the headquarters of the Nestorian church, the last independent remnant of the old Chaldæan church of Sassanian times to which Nestorius fled after his condemnation by the Council of Ephesus in 431. He was by no means the founder of that church, which in his time was nearly two centuries old, but became so identified with it that it came to be known by his name.

It is composed almost entirely of rugged clansmen, living in the gorges of the Great Zab and its tributaries. They are cultivators and shepherds, living exactly like the Kurds whose dress they have adopted, and against whom they are quite able to hold their own under ordinary conditions. Like

the Kurds they are broken up into tribes that frequently fight each other, carrying on long blood feuds, which are laid aside at times to withstand the attack of Moslem enemies.

They have an hereditary Patriarch who bears the title of Mar Shimun [St. Peter], and makes the same claim to spiritual infallibility as does the Pope of Rome. He lives at Kochannes, far up in the Zab valley where his tribesmen are well able to protect him from the Kurds. He is a most picturesque figure, a sort of Prester John, upholding the symbol of the Cross in the very heart of the lands in which the kalifs spread the worship of the Prophet thirteen centuries ago.

His ancient title, Catholicos of the East, takes us back to the days of the Sassanian Empire, when the Chaldæan Christians, subjects of that dynasty, separated from the Syrian church. Their Catholicos, or Archbishop, resided at the national capital of Ctesiphon, and often possessed great influence over the Persian emperor, who, however, always professed outwardly his national religion, the teachings of Zarathustra (Zoroaster). When the Kalifate was established at Bagdad, the Catholicos moved to Mosul, where, under the title of Patriarch he continued to exercise spiritual jurisdiction over the eastern branch of the Syrian church. At the time of the Mongol conquest under Tamerlane he was persecuted and forced to flee to the mountains, where the scattered flock became separated and elected two patriarchs, one residing at Ko-

channes, and the other at Rabban Hormizd, near Mosul. In later times, the latter submitted to Rome and recognized the authority of the Pope. But Mar Shimun remains today the independent successor of the proud Catholicos of the East.

Before the days of Abdul-Hamid there was a definite understanding between the Kurdish and Nestorian tribes. The latter were outnumbered but had strong positions to defend, and arms were equal. The rule was that the raider, whether Moslem or Christian, took all he could carry away but damaged nothing he left behind, and above all things he respected the persons and freedom of women. Live-stock, furniture, and arms were fair plunder; but houses were not to be burned nor were standing crops touched or irrigating works tampered with. Indeed, it was generally understood that no gentleman would break even his worst enemy's granary.

But the late Sultan aimed to destroy the Christians, whom he looked upon as a source of weakness and danger, and he so far succeeded that these old rules have been practically forgotten. The formation of the Hamidie regiments and the provision of modern rifles for the Kurds, while the Nestorians could secure only flint-locks, has weighted the balance strongly in favour of the former. Furthermore they have been taught not only to plunder, but to destroy: villages are now razed, crops burned, trees girdled, and women violated and led into captivity. But still the

Christians are often able to hold their own, and even at times to take vengeance on their oppressors. Though they are often armed with nothing better than flint-locks, and can secure no powder except what they make at home from materials gathered in their own mountains, they come of a fine old fighting stock that once spread the fear of the Assyrian arms to Africa and Asia Minor.

The Semitic origin of these people is clearly betrayed by their physiognomy, which is strikingly like that portrayed on the Assyrian reliefs. But they exhibit other well-known characteristics of their race, notably business acumen. Shut up in their little mountain cantons they find little chance for practice; but they are great wanderers. It is not rare to find men who have relatives in America, and others have spent years heaving coal on a transatlantic liner or laying ties on a Russian railway. An English missionary, sitting in the presence of Mar Shimun himself, was explaining the progress of the Japanese war. When he came to Port Arthur he was politely but firmly interrupted by one of the bystanders, who explained, in technical language, the arrangements of the forts at that place, which the Englishman had confused. He admitted having been employed in building those forts.

But the most typical employment of these followers of Prester John is more characteristically Semitic. They have discovered that kind-hearted Americans are easily prevailed upon to make gifts

to their struggling church, and go about raising money for "schools and orphanages." Many grow quite rich in this way—according to local standards—and one man actually brought $15,000 back to within a few miles of his native valley, where he was robbed of his last cent by a delighted party of Kurds.

Like their Moslem neighbours these people ought not to be judged according to Western ideals. Oriental charity is altogether selfish. Alms are given for the benefit of the giver, who does not trouble himself to what use his money is put, but looks upon the recipient as a convenience through whom he is enabled to acquire merit. So these mountain men cannot understand why the charitable should care whether the money goes to schools and orphanages or not. According to Eastern ideas the Lord will not reward them the less for their charity if the money is used rather for the comfort of the collector. Furthermore a gift is a gift to the Oriental, to whom the conception of a trust is unknown. What you give him he looks upon as his, and once his he alone has any right to dispose of it.

Beside this independent "Nestorian" church in the defiles of the mountains, there is the larger and better known "Chaldæan" church, the branch of the once united body that submitted to Rome. At the time of the Turkish conquest of Kurdistan Roman Catholic missionaries began to work among the Christians of the plains and foothills, and suc-

ceeded in persuading many to recognize the Pope and to so alter their tenets as not to be absolutely irreconcilable with those of Rome. Their success was due largely to their promises of protection from Turkish persecution, and to offers of educational opportunities. Those who refused to accept their domination were abandoned to Moslem persecution and refused admission to the missionary schools. If the stories told by eye-witnesses are true, their methods were unscrupulous and shameful. As early as the sixteenth century they appointed a Patriarch at Diyarbekr and by the beginning of the nineteenth they had brought all the Chaldæans in Turkey under their domination except those who lived in the then impenetrable country of the Kurds.

The church thus formed was termed Uniat Chaldæan or Uniat Nestorian, but is commonly termed simply Chaldæan. It differs only slightly from the original form and still retains the old communion. Confession is not required, transubstantiation and Purgatory do not form part of the creed, and images are not exhibited in the churches. Both elements are administered to communicants, and the secular clergy are permitted to marry as was universal in early times even in Europe. There is also a celibated clergy who are ascetics and may or may not live in monastic institutions. From their ranks the higher dignitaries, bishops, etc., are chosen, for these prelates are not permitted to marry. This is a very strange departure

from the usually strict canons of the Roman Church, but it is followed also in the case of the Syrian Catholics or Uniat Jacobites, who while uniting with Rome, refuse to have anything to do with those who inherit the taint of the heretical Nestorius, whose tenets their church exists to deny.

The head of the Uniat Chaldæan church and a Uniat Jacobite bishop reside at Mosul today. They are both Roman Catholic bishops, and we have the apparent anomaly of two episcopal heads in one see. As if this were not sufficient it is also the residence of an Apostolic Delegate, or Papal Legate, who is the general superior of all the Roman Catholic bishops in Mesopotamia, but exercises direct spiritual jurisdiction only over the European monks of the neighbourhood and such other Europeans of the Latin rite as business or duty may bring into his diocese.

The Chaldæans are not generally so well off as their Nestorian brethren, except in the cities and in the case of a few large village communities near them. They are almost exclusively cultivators, for their sheep and cattle have all been run off by the neighbouring Kurds. Their status is not that of *ashirets*, semi-autonomous tribes paying tribute like the Kurds, but the far inferior position of *rayats* or serfs. In the remoter districts they are actually subject to the Kurds, who take the best of their produce every year. They often spend the winter in the Christian villages, com-

pelling the miserable inhabitants to feed their masters' flocks on the grain while they have nothing but the bran. The suffering of the women at the hands of such brutal masters is impossible to describe.

This condition of affairs is worst in the Bohtan valleys, to the west of the country occupied by the Nestorians. There a powerful combination of Kurdish chiefs follow a tradition of barbarous persecution established by the notorious Bader Khan Bey, who, in 1895, at the instigation of Abdul-Hamid, perpetrated a horrible series of massacres, leading his men in *jehad* (holy war) into the heart of the Nestorian country, where he sacked Kochannes itself, forcing Mar Shimun to take refuge in Persia. In this country the Christian villagers are reduced to the last extremity of physical and moral degradation. So effectively have their priests been hounded out that few dare claim that dignity, and those that do are so uninstructed that they cannot even repeat the service. The people complain that, though called Christians, they know not whom they worship, nor the significance of their own name. As recently as January, 1909, during the disturbances at Mosul, there was a terrible massacre of villagers to the very walls of Sairt, where the Christians of the city barred their doors and windows and in some cases starved lest they share the fate of their rural co-religionists. The combined influence of the local Dominicans and the better class of Moslem

townspeople however succeeded in preventing any slaughter within the city. But no one will ever know how many individuals were slaughtered in the hills. When we passed through that country four years later the chiefs, called locally Emirs, were in open revolt, and great fear was felt for the safety of the poor *rayats*. The fall of Monastir had just become known and crowds of Moslem women were mourning in the cemeteries outside of Sairt. But fortunately the fear of an outbreak of religious fanaticism was not realized and we heard of nothing more than the usual oppression.

The Turkish custom in raising the internal revenue is to handle the powerful with gloves, and exact the last *metalik* from the oppressed. This iniquitous system doubles the burden that must be borne by the *rayats*, whose masters are glad enough to pay a tenth or twelfth of their tribute and let the tax-collectors bleed the rest from the subject villagers. Nor is this all they suffer. When two chiefs fall out and dare not attack each other they adopt the happy alternative of plundering each his enemy's *rayats*, slaying, burning, and carrying captive.

But even under such terrible persecution these poor people—Chaldæans and Nestorians—never fail to cling to their faith. A striking incident of such faithfulness came to the notice of a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's mission to the Nestorians a short time ago. A deacon of that church stopped in the village of Shernakh, thirty

miles from Sairt, lodging according to custom in the chief's house. When he had supped a servant summoned him to attend the lady of the house. In great surprise he followed the messenger. He was led into the presence of an old woman who fairly wept with joy at sight of him, the first Christian she had seen during sixty years of captivity. She had been taken captive in the great raid of 1845 and been made a scullion in the house of her master. By sheer force of character and personal honesty she had raised herself to the position of mistress of the house, to which all agreed she had been a blessing. Nor had she relaxed her Christian observance during all the years of her captivity in the house of a Moslem, but carefully observed all the fasts of her church and kept the Sabbath in the strict manner of her sect. Having secured from the deacon a morsel of bread blessed at the Eucharist, without which no Syrian Christian sets out on a journey, she bade him adieu, confident of possessing the blessing of the Church against the time when her soul should be required of her.

In the lower valleys the condition of the *rayat* population is decidedly better, but they are still the prey of Kurds and Turkish officials, except in the very largest villages near the cities. Such a village is that of Tel Kaif, one of the earliest to adopt the Roman allegiance. It is a village of several thousand inhabitants, ministered to by a number of priests, five of whom called on us while

we were the guests of the village. The oldest of these was a quaint old white-bearded man, of a quiet, spiritual countenance who might have sat for a picture of the Apostle John during his last days at Patmos. The others were all grave but pleasant, of whom the youngest made the greatest impression upon us. He was a dark man with kindly but markedly Semitic features, who had but lately taken orders. He had studied in Rome, and spoke Italian and a few words of French and English. He greatly deplored the lack of a stable government and said the hope of his Church was in England. He was a pronounced Russophobe, looking upon that race as little, if any, better than the Turks. They invited our attendance in the large stone church, where a simple service is held every evening, in a great barn-like room devoid of images or pictures. Like most of the churches in the region its only outward decoration is a belfry, almost as important a Christian symbol as the cross, for Mohammed execrated the use of bells because they are of the devil. So it is in direct contravention of Moslem law that every church service begins and ends with furious ringing of bells.

The people of Tel Kaif are well known as river men in the Tigris valley. They form the crews of all the Lynch steamers, and of those running on the Karun River in Persia, from Mahommerah to Ahwaz. There is now a Chaldæan priest in the latter city, quite near the old Christian college

of Jund-i-Shapur whence went forth the missionaries that established the Nestorian church in Turkestan, in China, and in India. Many of these people have gone to America and other parts of the world, and they are much in demand as servants in Bagdad. Our man Asoufi, though born in that city, claimed Tel Kaif as the native town of his parents. The Tel Kaifis are muleteers too, and it was from among their number that we secured four men with seven rather mean animals, six mules and a horse, to carry us on to Lake Van from Mosul. I regret to say that little can be said in favour of these men, who proved to be hard bargainers, selfish and unkind to their beasts, which they heartlessly underfed. The other Chaldæans we employed were, on the whole, rather good. Asoufi left little to be desired; he was faithful, scrupulously honest, willing, patient, and intelligent.

The Jacobites of Kurdistan and the neighbouring plains form a remnant of the Syrian church, whose defection from the Greek orthodox dates, not from the Council of Ephesus in 431, as in the case of the Nestorian, but from that of Chalcedon, twenty years later. As in the case of the more eastern church the real reason for Syrian repudiation of Constantinople was political rather than doctrinal. But so deeply involved in doctrinal questions did the church become that they fairly overshadowed the more important temporal difficulties. And that is the reason why Jacobites and Nestorians

will not today unite, for the former were followers of Cyril in 431, the arch enemy of Nestorius whose name the latter bear. It does not signify at all that the doctrines now taught in both churches are identical, and that, if Nestorius did teach the doctrines for which he was condemned, which is improbable, they have been forgotten by his followers. The fact remains that historically the two churches are irreconcilable. On account of the condemnation by the two councils of these churches they have been branded in the West with the name Monophysites, believers in one nature. Now it is quite possible that at one time this doctrine may have been held, but today it has entirely disappeared from both churches, who teach the dual nature of Christ. Their doctrines and services savour strongly of Western Protestantism. Indeed there is a marked resemblance between them and the Church of England, a fact strongly realized by the Nestorians, who appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1868 to aid them in keeping alive their closely related communion. The answer to this appeal was the formation of a mission of gallant English clergymen who are labouring, not to proselytize, but to build up the existing Nestorian church.

The home of the Jacobite church is the great volcanic plateau of the Tur Abdin, the "Mountain of God's Servants," which lies to the west of the Tigris, north of the Mosul plain. Many of them are to be found in the Tigris valley and in Mosul,

where, as I have already mentioned, the British vice-consul lives in one of their monasteries. Their patriarch, Mar (Saint) Ignatius, lives in Deir-al-Zaaferan, the "Monastery of the Yellow Rocks," near the important town of Mardin, seven days north of Mosul. He is the direct inheritor of the old see of Antioch, formerly the temporal and religious capital of Syria. There he remained until after the Arab conquest, but as persecution followed persecution he was forced to flee from monastery to monastery until he found refuge in the remote Tur Abdin. There he gathered his little flock about him and they have so successfully held their own that the traveller across that rough plateau of black volcanic rock sees only Christian villages, and may rest each night in a Christian church or monastic institution.

They owe their name, or rather nickname, to an incident of the days of Justinian, who was a worse enemy than the Mohammedans to those he looked upon as heretics. In order to break the power of the Syrian church and force its members into orthodoxy, he imprisoned all their bishops to prevent the ordination of any unorthodox clergy. But they succeeded in secretly consecrating a monk, Jacobus Baradæus, who for thirty-five years was the only bishop of the church at large. Disguised as a beggar he wandered from place to place, filling the vacancies in the ranks of the clergy. Of course he was not recognized by the orthodox, who termed his clergy Jacobites, followers of Jacobus,

not of Christ. This term of opprobrium soon came to be applied to the entire church, and remains today a sinister reminder of the day when Christian persecuted Christian, preparing the way for Mohammedan supremacy in the Near East.

The vilayet of Mosul is the home of a strange survival of the old Magian cult of Persia, whose followers today are called Yezidis. These unfortunates are doomed to spend their lives in the worship of the devil in order that they may, if possible, mitigate their lot in hell. They revere the spirit of evil because they fear him, and believe that the good god, Yazdan, the Most High, will do no harm. They make no attempt to deny that it is Sheitan whom they worship, though that name is interdicted among them, and to mention it in the presence of one of their number is a deadly insult. Instead they use the name Melek Taus, meaning the Spirit-Peacock, the peacock being the form in which they worship his Satanic majesty.

Their creed has little of its pristine purity remaining, on account of the incessant persecution by Christians and Mohammedans. From both these religions and from the Jews they have borrowed much, until their doctrine has become a bewildering patchwork, its form only remaining similar to the original type. From the Magians they have inherited the idea of propitiating Ahriman, the evil principle, and their word for God, Yazdan, is clearly a corruption of the Persian Ahuramazda. They retain also the old nature

worship, reverencing the sun, springs of water, and trees.

Besides Melek Taus, the great evil spirit, they recognize Melek Isa, Jesus, and the Gospels they accept as canonical; but they deny the crucifixion, accepting the Mohammedan version that a likeness only was raised on the cross, the real Jesus being snatched away, they add, by Melek Taus. His seat is now the sun, which they call Sheikh Shems-ed-din, and before which they prostrate themselves every morning. At their great yearly festival they sacrifice one sheep to Melek Isa, but seven to Melek Taus; for the former is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, but the latter is a fierce and jealous god. He it is who now rules the world, having been appointed to that position for ten thousand years, of which four thousand are yet to run. After that the power of evil will be broken and Melek Isa will reign for another ten millennia.

Mohammed provided for tolerant treatment of Christians and Jews because they were "people of a book" *i.e.* of a revealed religion. The Yezidis, however, were looked upon as people without a book and therefore worthy of most drastic persecution. Today the Moslem looks upon the Christian as a dog, for though he reveres the lesser prophets Moses and Jesus, he denies the greatest of all prophets, Mohammed. The Jew is far lower, for though he has a book he follows only Moses, denying both Jesus and Mohammed. But as for the Yezidi, he has no prophet at all that the Moslem

knows, nor even a book. He is therefore the victim of every kind of ill treatment, in which Christians and Jews join. He is however a little too familiar with the devil to be attacked save in force, and the most bigoted Moslem will hesitate to pass a Yezidi's house at night.

It is now known that the Yezidis have a book; but so carefully is it concealed and so jealously is the art of reading guarded by the ruling family, who alone share its mysteries, that it can be of little value to the congregation. It is called the Kitab-al-Aswad, the Black Book, and dates from the tenth century. In it we find a general discussion of Yezidi belief at that time, which is further brought out by a thirteenth-century commentary, the Kitab-al-Jilwa, or Book of Enlightenment. From them we are able to reconstruct a curiously agglomerated cosmogonic myth.

In the beginning the seven archangels began the work of creation, but fell out over the fashioning of the snake, which Melek Taus had especially devoted himself to. In the quarrel that ensued he was worsted and cast down from heaven with his snake, the others refusing to have anything more to do with him or his earth. In a great rage he finished the work of creation and established, as his very own, the Yezidi religion. Those who are born to this religion are bound to worship him and spend their lives in propitiating him. They do not hope to get to heaven; indeed they believe it to be inaccessible to one of their number,

unless he do four times as much good as evil. However they do believe that when the ten thousand years are up Melek Taus will be reinstated in heaven, and will then be good to his faithful followers on earth. A naïve picture, indeed, of a restored Lucifer, feeling kindly toward those who were faithful to him in his unregenerate days.

However black may be the prospect thus offered the faithful Yezidi, he is almost unknown to give up his faith, even in times of bitterest persecution. Every day he prays, "O Melek Taus, thou hast created me a Yezidi, keep me ever faithful to my religion." This is a very striking commentary on the Oriental idea of religion as coextensive with tribal or race consciousness.

Although there are more Yezidis to the southwest of Mosul, in the rugged Jebel Sinjar, than in any other quarter, their chief shrine is a short distance to the north-east. This temple of the devil is hidden away in a hollow of the Kurdish mountains not far from the road to the Nestorian capital. It is reached by devious ways that straggle through desolate gorges. It is no easy matter to gain access, but for the foreigner every gate of the oppressed is soon opened, once he identifies himself. Within is a series of bare rooms where pilgrims are lodged, and then the central shrine and burial-place of the Yezidi saint Sheikh Adi, who now doubtless lords it in the train of Lucifer. Above the shrine rise two fluted conical spires, a curious architectural form, inherited

doubtless from some older builders whose lore has been lost to us.

The stones in the wall of the façade are cut with cabalistic signs, of which the meaning is either forgotten or carefully guarded. Beside the door in high relief is the figure of the snake, closely associated with Melek Taus in Yezidi legend, and here kept carefully blacked.

Within the door is a chilly darkness and the roar of running waters. The interior consists of two vaulted aisles, one a little higher than the other. Almost midway in the wall of the former is a sort of grill, closing a doorway within which is the devil's sanctuary. It is occupied merely by a chest covered by red cloths, but within is the chief effigy of Melek Taus, the sacred peacock. Beyond the shrine is a cave full of running water, a sacred spring said to be, like many others, connected with the well of Zemzem at Mecca.

This spring owes its origin to Sheikh Adi, the eponymous prophet of the shrine. There came to him certain sheikhs from Mecca who sought to turn him from his religion and persuade him to follow Mohammed. He asked them whence they came and what they had left behind that they missed and would like to have. One had forgotten his favourite staff, another had mislaid a string of beads. Thereupon Sheikh Adi struck upon the ground with his staff. Instantly water began to flow and with the water came first the staff, and then the beads, straight from Mecca. Of course

the sheikhs could not argue against such a miracle and forthwith became Yezidis.

Who Sheikh Adi was and whence he came we cannot tell for there are many stories about him, all so mystical as to leave little basis of fact. He is said to have come from Aleppo, or the Hauran, where the Magian cult held out for a long time and is now represented by the Druses. Very likely he was a Druse, and wandered eastward on some pilgrimage, found this remnant of his once widespread cult, and finished his days in their midst.

Layard, the excavator of Nineveh, was very much liked among the Devil-Worshippers and saw many of their most sacred rites, of which he has left us some fascinating descriptions in his *Nineveh and its Remains*. These rites show close resemblances to some of the old Assyrian ceremonies, and doubtless much of their faith was of Chaldæan origin. The people themselves are Semitic and today speak Arabic.

They have a distinctive dress in which red, Lucifer's peculiar colour, is predominant. It consists in the case of the men of a tunic, trousers, and shirt of white with a red sash and turban. They abhor blue, the colour used by Moslems and Christians to ward off the evil eye.

They are ruled by a sheikh called an Emir, who belongs to a ruling family which has held the distinction for generations. Until quite recently this position was held by a rather strong and well-known old man named Ali Bey. He disap-

peared a short time ago and was succeeded by his nephew Ismail Bey. At the time of our visit that young man too had been forced to flee by his sister. He was most unpopular on account of his enlightened views, picked up in Tiflis, in Russia, where are a large body of his followers, and whither he had fled from his uncle's jealousy. He went so far as to propose to establish schools for his people, but the only response he got was the accusation that he sought to make Christians of them. He wanders back and forth in exile, ever fearful of his sister who holds the reigns of government for her son, a little lad whom we saw in Mosul.

The authority of the Emir is absolute over all the 150,000 Yezidis that are scattered over the mountains of Kurdistan and neighbouring parts of Persia and Russia. His word is law and he has the power not only of life and death, but to condemn to eternal damnation in the life to come.

His chief income is derived from seven Sanjaks or Standards, which are images in bronze of Melek Taus, said to have been fashioned by him. Each bears the legend: "Blessings go where you go; he that kisses you, kisses me; he that gives to you, gives to me," which are supposed to be the words of Melek Taus. These images are carried from village to village, escorted with great pomp and circumstance, and guarded with jealous care lest they fall into the hands of the enemies of the faith.

On reaching a village the gifts of the villagers are brought, varying in amount according to the

wealth of the giver. During the night, the peacock rests in the house of the Agha, and may remain a second night if his gift be large enough. If there be several men of substance in the village it may spend some time going from house to house, upon each of which it is supposed to confer a blessing, which must be duly paid for. The privilege of carrying it is farmed out for a lump sum, which is said to have been as high as 100,000 *liras* in the days of Ali Bey. But times are bad for the Yezidis now that the Kurds have modern rifles. When Ismail Bey fled from his sister he carried one of the Sanjaks with him, which bade fair to keep him well supplied with the necessaries of life. But it was unfortunately carried off by a servant who returned it to Sheikh Adi in return for a sum said to have made him independent for life.

It might be supposed that a people that worship Satan would seek to please their divinity by imitation. This is not the case with the Yezidis, who are truthful and honest, faithful to every obligation. Melek Taus is invoked as guardian of oaths in a curious manner. A circle is drawn upon the ground and someone declares that all within it belongs to Melek Taus. The witness then enters it and fully believes that hopeless damnation would follow any deviation from the truth. In their family relations too the Yezidis bear a good reputation; divorce is impossible, prostitution and adultery almost unknown.

CHAPTER IX

INTO THE COUNTRY OF THE HAKKIARI KURDS

WE who live where a month without a shower to lay the dust is considered a burden, can little appreciate the situation in those less favoured regions in which a rainless year may spread famine and desolation. Such a region is the upper Tigris valley. To the south stretch away the vast deserts of Mesopotamia and Arabia upon which rain is said to fall but once in seven years. To the north are the lofty mountains of Kurdistan and Armenia whose snow-capped summits look down upon well-watered valleys, shut off from the desert by dangerous passes. At the end of the winter when Mesopotamia has been chilled by the cold nights, the clouds slip down from the mountains and drop the rain upon the foothills and later, if the conditions be favourable, water a wide belt of the flat country beyond. Sometimes, however, a warm winter makes the rains late and the hot blast sweeps too early across the Arabian desert, dissipates the clouds, and the rains are lost. This happens about once in ten years and causes great distress because only those

crops that can be laboriously irrigated with hoists from the river can be saved. These years are looked forward to with a feeling little short of terror by the people, and when a drought is threatened the religious fervour of the Semitic races breaks out in a frenzy of supplication.

At the time of our visit to Mosul in March the rains were overdue, the soil was baked hard, and the winter-sown barley had not begun its spring growth. One day when we had ridden among the mounds of ancient Nineveh we returned toward evening to the river bank where we found the water-hoists at work. The scrawny blind-folded mules toiled around and around turning the wheels that raised the endless chains of buckets to swell the sickly streams in the irrigating ditches, while ragged Arab boys sat by idly kicking their heels in the dust or shrilly chanting some desert legend. Only here had the barley reached a fair height but even here it was straggling and listless. The only plants that did not seem to be calling for water were the little blue irises of the desert that grew wherever they were not disturbed, even in the dust of the roadway.

When we rode into the city we found the booths in the bazaars were closed, although it was not yet sunset, and even the little shops, where loaves of unleavened bread, dates, and raisins are always exposed for sale, seemed to expect no customers, and the charcoal braziers over which little lumps of meat are roasted on metal skewers were not lighted.

The streets were full of people all moving in the same direction, but when the cries of the muezzins sounded from the minarets calling the faithful to prayer the crowds melted away and our horses' hoofs echoed hollowly in the narrow streets.

When we arrived at the consulate we learned that it was the first of three days of fasting and prayer for rain. The sun having set we went up to the roof with our host and saw, through the gloom of the gathering dusk, the blue smoke-haze of the cooking rise over the roofs of the city, and knew that the faithful had finished their fast for that day and were preparing for more to come by feasting during the hours when feasting is permitted.

Soon there rose through the still air a chant, a cry to God to hear the prayers of his people. Then from all over the city came the words, repeated with measured beat like a solemn litany, "La Allah il Allah! La Allah il Allah!" The loafers in the streets stood in groups beating their hands to the measure. In the coffee-houses, usually painfully silent, where no conversation is carried on above a whisper, pandemonium broke loose, and the staid old Arabs joined in the monotonous repetition, pausing only to snatch a puff from a nargileh or a sip from a tiny cup of coffee or glass of tea. The narrow windows of the houses opened and heads were thrust out, people were leaning from the parapets of the roofs, and others must have been in the court-yards, all

joining in reiterating the solemn chant, "There is no God but God." Far into the night they kept it up and even long after midnight we heard the words repeated again and again for half an hour at a time.

The first day was succeeded by another day of fasting, another night of prayer. The third day marked the culmination. The whole city was dressed in holiday attire. No one did any work, of course, but crowds visited all the shrines of the city from daybreak to sunset and made offerings and prayers. But the greatest crowds visited the most sacred shrine of all, the tomb of the prophet Jonah. The bridge that leads across the Tigris to Nineveh was thronged with worshippers, Moslem, Christian, and Jew alike, who went to pray in a dozen languages to the good prophet Nibi Yunis to persuade Allah, Jesus, or Jahveh to allow the gentle rain to fall so that the crops would not utterly fail. There were Arabs in cloaks of brown, or brown and white stripes, with bright head kerchiefs or turbans, Turkish troops in green uniforms, Moslem women in embroidered silk *abas*, Jewish women in gay shawls, Christian priests in rusty black, Kurds in goatskin jackets and baggy trousers, Persians, Circassians, all the motley throng of an Oriental city.

We left Mosul next day on our journey up the Tigris valley. Before we reached our resting place at the end of the day it began to rain and it was with much satisfaction that we reached the shelter

of the rest-house at Tel Kaif, a village of Chaldæan Christians. The rain did not abate on the following day. Indeed so great was the downpour that it was impossible to march. So we stopped among our Christian friends another day. The third day dawned clear and cool and we set out joyfully, accompanied for a distance by almost the whole village, who surrounded us like a cloud, men, women, and children. I did not get out my poncho for I did not dream that in that dry country it would rain for three days in succession. But I was not reckoning on the effect of the three days of fasting. Soon after we had had tiffin it began to rain. Great black clouds were driven toward us by fierce gusts of wind that blew directly in our faces. Then the clouds broke suddenly and we were deluged with rain. At times it fell in such sheets that I could not see my horse's head and could only huddle down, feeling the rain running off my helmet, down my neck, into my high boots, everywhere. I was quickly soaked and when we could go on again the horses splashed through water that ran in streams down the trail.

We rode on through a steady downpour. Late in the afternoon we came to a stream that wet our horses' girths as we forded it, but gave us no serious trouble. By this time Edwin Warfield and I, with one of our two *zaptiehs*, had pressed forward a mile or more ahead of the caravan. Beyond the stream we climbed a steep escarpment reaching a plateau that overlooked the flat country

over which we had been travelling. We paused at the top of the slippery ascent to look back. At our feet ran the river, a dull red line. Straight away stretched the road, bright red with vivid green grass on either side, but fading quickly in the dull grey mist of the rain. A post caravan, the horses loaded with rubber mail-sacks, splashed by, the Tartar in charge urging the horses to greater speed in his haste to reach shelter. Then we saw our own caravan approaching the river and satisfied of their safety rode on. We crossed some hollows, splashing through deep water at the bottom of each, and soon came in sight of a ruined castle on a hill, with a village nestling at its foot. The dark brown mud houses were relieved by bright white dots that shone even through the rain, for there was a nesting stork on every one of the thatched roofs. A small stream was between us and the village, the whole bottom filled with soft grey mud. We slithered and slid down one bank and my companion's horse splashed to and up the other. I started to follow when suddenly everything went out from under me and I found myself sitting in soft mud, my feet still in the stirrups, with my mule's head and forefeet sticking out in front and his tail floating behind. I climbed out on the saddle and reaching the bank encouraged my beast, who managed to free himself. We then rode up to the inn in the village, and having turned our mounts over to the innkeeper, sat down before a smoking fire in the centre of a mud-walled room.

There we waited for the caravan and every time the barking of dogs in the village heralded the return of a flock of sheep or herd of mares from the pastures, we looked out for our baggage, only to suffer disappointment after disappointment. Sitting on the mud floor before the smoky fire and raising my boots to let the water pour out in streams, I began to think of the warm sleeping-bag and dry clothes in the delinquent packs. Besides we had nothing to eat, and a chilly wind was blowing across the plateau. Finally the *zaptieh* who had ridden back to investigate returned with the cheerless information that the stream we had crossed but a short time before had risen so high as to be impassable, and our caravan had been compelled to camp on the other side. So we made ourselves as comfortable as might be and, with the slight consolation of a flask of whiskey from our first-aid kit, and a bit of tea secured from the innkeeper, we slept soundly until dawn.

It was a beautiful morning that followed, clear and sunny, and we sallied forth in our wet clothes to look at this village of Simeb. Its only point of interest is the badly ruined castle which now serves as a *zaptieh* post. The view over the heavily rolling country is very fine. To the south-west the land falls off rapidly toward the plain of the Tigris, but in the opposite direction rises the bare rocky ridge of Jebel Abiad. Beautiful as this country was, I fear we could not help wishing for breakfast.

The Ferry at Feish-Khabur

About ten o'clock the caravan put in an appearance, and we set Asoufi right to work to get us the most filling victuals that could be had in a short time. Then we got into dry clothes and hovered around the charcoal brazier over which breakfast was preparing. The clear air of the hills would have given any one a good appetite, and we had had no square meal since breakfast the day before. So we stood not on ceremony but got outside of a meal the memory of which rejoices my heart to this day. Little incidents of this sort add a real spice to caravan travel and are often remembered when more important things are forgotten.

Hidden away in a cleft of the rocky, precipitous Jebel Abiad is the little stone village of Asi. It is a very pretty spot, for the mouth of the cleft is choked with tall poplars and blossoming fruit trees. Before them slope away a series of walled vineyards and grain fields, while rocky pastures, full of colourful spring flowers, hem in the cultivation on either side. The dwellings are low stone huts with roofs of poplar poles plastered with mud. Conspicuous among them is the larger house of the priest, which serves his little flock also as a church, for the people of this village are of the congregation of Mar Shimun, and members of the so-called Nestorian communion. Like most of their brethren they dress like the Kurds, in baggy trousers and goatskin vests.

To this village we came to take refuge from the

rain which overtook us a few hours beyond Simeb. Being but a tiny isolated village it had no inn, but a house was placed at our disposal when we had alighted in the mud that is the most conspicuous feature of such a place. This house contained one long narrow room, high enough for a tall man to stand upright, with a door at the end of one of the side walls. Windows it had but they were very small and closed, in the usual style of the mountain villages, by a handful of stones. Being a Christian house there was a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape by. Mohammedan houses have only a crack left between wall and roof, while the Yezidis make no provision for that sort of thing at all. On the mud floor were two long mats of grass. Our muleteers and some of the villagers gathered around the brazier where Asoufi was preparing our dinner and conversed in the low, grave tones that Orientals affect on such occasions.

Before sunset the sharp shower, that had driven us to shelter, was over and we sallied out with our guns for a bit of shooting among the fields of Asi. But these mountaineers are better shots than the people of the plains, and we found no game near the village on this occasion or any other.

Up from Mosul and along the foot of this Jebel Abiad we frequently saw the marks of a made road. It consisted of roughly square limestone blocks set in the ground like the cobbles of a village street. There was no bed under them and no sign of a top dressing ever having been applied. At

times the caravan track ran beside it, but more frequently it wandered away in search of a better grade, for the white band of limestone ran straight ahead over the rolling places, with a splendid disregard of the steepest ascents. This thing was probably laid by order of some Vali who had the reform bee in his turban, and was more fortunate in his advisers than in his engineers. Naturally pack animals will not walk on rough blocks of stone when there is a nice dirt track, and they will zigzag up or down a slope.

But in one place we did find a fairly well-made road, without which it would have been very difficult to complete our next day's march, although it was, of course, in very bad repair. It leads through a pass that is the only gap in the forty-mile rock wall of Jebel Abiad.

The first section of this pass is tame enough, for the slopes on either side, though high and steep, are rounded. But on account of the dip of the strata the far side is both ragged and precipitous. Streams run down each side forming the gorges up and down which the road runs. The first one, running over the top of the strata, is nowhere picturesque, but the other has cut a wild and beautiful gorge, undermining the road and adding greatly to the picturesqueness of the scene. In places its bed is filled with huge blocks of a coarse conglomerate, a layer of which it has undermined.

We crossed the pass in a heavy rain and started down amid hills thinly clad with oak scrub, that

gradually disappeared as we descended into the rugged parts of the gorge. All was desolate and the few mountaineers we met added to the wildness of the scene. Heavy clouds obscured the sharp hills above at intervals and showered us with rain, while peals of thunder reverberated in the narrow gorge with a deafening din. Then a high wind would drive the clouds away and a rainbow spread across the gorge from wall to wall. As we came down lower the clouds at one time opened and gave us a view of the valley we were approaching, a broad rain-drenched country with the muddy Khabur River winding through it. When the clouds closed again we were winding in and out among huge boulders of pudding-stone, with big drops of water standing out all over them.

After a time, during which we often sank to the knees in mud or waded the torrent in places where it had engulfed the road, we came out above the valley and began to feel the force of the cold wind. It was driving the mist before it, and as we watched it swept the clouds away like a curtain. It left an atmosphere as clear as crystal through which great peaks, newly decked with snow, shone white across the valley, against the black and stormy sky. At our feet the muddy river whirled around an island with a sharp promontory on which stood a ruined castle, and behind it the flat roofs of a town. Beyond spread the wheat-fields of the valley ranging up to the barrier ridge. Higher still, tier on tier, ragged peak and knife-edge ridge

succeeded snow-field and glacial valley. Down to the town of the castle we came, emerging from the gorge upon a widespread alluvial fan. A bridge gave access to the town and through the muddy, smelly streets we rode to the dirty little khan.

This place is called Zakho and must have been of no little importance at one time. The foundations of its castle very likely date from Roman times, though the carving that still exists within its ruined walls, on door and window frame, indicates that parts of the structure were built by the Seljuk Turks in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Situated near the mouth of a valley which gives access to some of the remoter parts of Kurdistan, and also at the foot of the pass that leads to Mosul, its position was once of primary strategic importance.

Its people are chiefly Christian and Jew, but there are also Kurds and Arabs with a few Turkish officials. Each race has, of course, its own language.

Zakho is the residence of a Chaldæan bishop whose church is situated on the mainland. Quite near it is the Nestorian church, which boasts a smaller membership and is led only by a simple priest. The Jews are, like most of those in these mountains, short, stocky men, fine-featured and dark, usually wearing very heavy beards which in the older men are white, lending a most patriarchal dignity to the wearer. They are pleasant men and on perfectly good terms both with

Nazarenes and the true believers. These have a certain dread of them however for they have a way of placing their associates under obligation and then abusing them as ingrates with such a flood of regretful tears that, for very shame, the "oppressor" is compelled to make them a present. Those of Zakho still speak Hebrew and claim to belong to the children of the captivity.

Continued rain compelled us to spend the next day in the town and we became pretty well acquainted with it. Between showers we ascended to the roof of the inn whence a beautiful view lay spread out: the ruined castle with the storks nesting upon its walls, the fertile valley, and the magically beautiful mountains, that appeared now and again, looming almost in reach, so clear was the rain-washed atmosphere.

We received a call from the Kaimakam who represents the Hukumet in this isolated stronghold of its empire. With him came a certain Yussuf Agha, the local landholder and hereditary chief of the neighbouring Kurds. He was much interested in America and told us he would like to go there with us but feared to leave his property for so long a time, lest it be attacked by the *ashirets*, the independent tribes, who were his enemies. In true American style we boomed our native land and he became so enthusiastic that he even proposed to sell out and join us later in the land of the free. But when we explained to him the labour conditions under which our land is worked, and

the "hired man" system, he decided he was better off in the Khabur valley, for all the *ashirets* that threatened his peace.

The people in this vicinity are all armed with modern rifles, largely Mausers, which are rapidly taking the place of the older Martinis and Sniders. They are almost all of German manufacture and are the cast-off arms of the German army which have there been replaced by later patterns. These mountain riflemen realize that a rifle is of no use without cartridges, so they go about fairly covered with that kind of hardware. Two belts are usually worn and often a bandolier, or even two. I have often seen men with hundreds of 8 mm. or 11 mm. cartridges that must have weighed a good hundred pounds. In one of their plundering expeditions or inter-village battles they are said actually to use up their whole supply, and yet it must not be supposed that they do so without result, as is common among the Arabs. These hillmen are well versed in the methods of guerilla warfare, and find cover as naturally and readily as an Afghan borderer and shoot as straight. In times of *jehad*, or holy war, whole villages are wiped out, and it is not at all uncommon for small parties of raiders to be cut off in a narrow valley and slain to a man.

At Zakho we learned that the heavy rains had so swollen the numerous streams of the valley that to cross them and proceed as we had planned across the valley and up the left bank of the Tigris was impossible. So we decided to keep

along the Jebel Abiad on the southern side of the valley and strike the Tigris a day's march from Zakho at the Christian village of Feish-Khabur. It was a very beautiful day's march for the valley is exceedingly fertile on account of the constant flow of water from the snowy heights. The reason it is not populous is that the people of the less favoured surrounding country make it a regular raiding ground. The villagers have little enough to steal, but even that is carried away from time to time by nomad Kurds, who pass through every year and pasture their flocks on any crops not directly under the protection of some prominent chief, such as Yussuf Agha whom we saw at Zakho. Of course they give the towns a wide berth but they are the scourge of every small hamlet, especially if it be Christian.

The result is that the villages are few and wretched, with no domestic animals except fierce dogs and a few scrawny old hens. Of trees we saw many for even such a desolating whirlwind as a Kurdish *razzia* respects them, except under exceptional circumstances, nor will it burn huts or wantonly destroy crops except in the fiercest *jehad*. These trees are not near the villages, although they once were without doubt. The reason for this is that a nice orchard is a charming place to camp, and the site of a nomad camp is no neighbourhood for a village.

Attracted by the unoccupied pasture lands were little groups of tent-dwelling Yezidis and

gypsies, miserable people, preyed upon by all because of their paganism, who wander furtively about with a few sheep, and snatch a living from the most impossible localities. They introduce a fresh linguistic, racial, and religious complication into this unhappy valley, where the Moslem persecutes the Christian, the Christian the Jew, and all unite to throw stones at these poor spirit worshippers, outcast for lack of a book.

As we climbed the side of the ridge at one point and wound around a buttress of the mountain we came upon a little village hidden behind it, situated beside some beautiful springs of water, amid unused pastures. Here one of our muleteers, while seeking information regarding the road, was fiercely attacked by one of the large, long-haired mastiffs that frequently make these villages hideous, and was bitten clear through the calf of one leg. It was an ugly and dangerous wound, but seemed to cause him no great inconvenience, and served as an excuse for climbing on one of the loads when passing a ford.

Climbing to the ridge behind the valley we made our way along to the point where it is cut off by the Tigris. The views of the valley were very fine, especially toward the end where the Khabur breaks up into a sort of delta before flowing into the larger river.

On the very end of Jebel Abiad, looking down upon the same old muddy Tigris that we had been seeing so much of, was the village of Feish-Khabur,

piled up in several stories on a low mound. In the centre was a sort of guest house whither we were led, and cordially received because of our religion. We passed through a low doorway into a narrow court where a group of women were swinging a goatskin back and forth, to separate the butter from the curds it contained. They were pleasant little women in shapeless red "mother Hubbards," smiling and bright-looking, not furtive and closely veiled like women in the cities.

Leaving our animals in the court we ascended a narrow flight of stone steps to a long, well built room with a vaulted stone roof and large windows looking out over a part of the village toward the ridge, which was partly hidden by the pouring rain. On each side was a divan long enough to provide sleeping place for some ten persons, and neatly covered with felt mats and padded quilts for that purpose. At the far end of the room was a fireplace with a rude chimney. So strikingly superior was this room to any we had seen in Moslem villages that we could not help remarking on it. So large and strongly built was the whole building, also, that it was virtually a fortress and appeared to be the residence of a large number of people. Only in the large cities of this region are such substantial structures to be seen. The furniture too was worthy of note, for all of the Moslem villagers we encountered slept and sat on the ground, the only furniture anywhere being the high benches used at the coffee-houses, which

we saw only in towns much larger than this village of Feish-Khabur.

When we looked about the village we found the houses, as a whole, much on the usual pattern—rough stone walls and flat mud roofs. There is a strongly built church with square uncompromising walls, loopholed at the top and distinguished by a belfry. It stands at the very top of a picturesque cliff at the foot of which the Tigris flows by in oily swirling eddies.

The dress of these people is very varied but there seems to be a distinct type peculiar to them. One man that acted as our cicerone and appeared to be a person of some importance was dressed in this style. His trousers were so extremely full that when he stood still he appeared to be wearing the Arab tunic, or a rather full petticoat. They were of pure white cotton, but the vest above was striped with red and figured white. His jacket was short-waisted and narrow sleeved, of dark blue cloth, and on his head he wore the Arab *egal*, a diagonally folded kerchief held in place by a double woollen circlet. All was immaculately clean, a feature rare enough in these hills to excite attention, but quite common among these villagers. His face was Semitic but very handsome; so cleanly cut were the features and so gentle the eyes and mouth that he might have played the Christ at Oberammergau. Like most of the people of this country he usually had a cigarette between his lips.

The great size and strength of the building that

I have described has led me to the belief that it is of some antiquity, and has served as a fortress here for some time. The evident prosperity of the people,—Christians in this region are generally quite the contrary,—and their peculiarities in dress and personal habits, also indicate that this is an old and independent community. I should like to have an opportunity to really study them and find if possible some record of their history.

We received a call from their "padre father," a priest of the Chaldæan faith, a reverend old man who came with another also in holy orders. From them we learned that the village had no Turkish official, that the land was owned by the community and not by a landholder, as is usual in Turkey, and that they collected their own taxes and paid them directly to the Vali. We could not, however, learn anything of the history of the community.

The next morning we started out to cross the Tigris and continue our journey. A steep path leads by the church, down among huge boulders, to the foot of the cliff where we entered a ferryboat and were conveyed across in two trips. These Tigris ferryboats are of a very ancient pattern. They are awkward tubs, about half as wide as they are long, of boards rendered water-tight by careful caulking. The square bow is low and shelving, so as to form a sort of gangway when the boat is beached. The stern is high and pointed, with a post to which is lashed a long paddle, a pole with a board nailed to the end as a rule, by which

The Christian Village of Feish-Khabur

the contrivance is steered. From a couple of high thwarts in front of the stern post the "crew" work one or two long sweeps, so as to give steerage way, which enables the craft to be kept at an angle to the current, which sweeps it across sidewise, carrying it some way downstream. The process seems most precarious, but accidents are rare. Its chief trouble is the great length of time required; for the boat has to be hauled up along the bank for a quarter or half mile before each crossing. Of course this is done in a leisurely way, and when it is once accomplished there must be a rest. Embarking the animals also takes time, especially as the loads have to be removed and reloaded on the other bank.

The present occasion was no exception to the rule and we spent most of the morning in reaching the far side. There on the bank was a miserable village with a few dilapidated huts, near which a camel caravan was camped. These caravans come through this country frequently, often making their way from Bagdad to Diyarbekr and thence into Asia Minor, reaching the railroad at Cæsarea or Koniah. But they are not often seen and never stop at the inns as mule and horse caravans do. Their camps are in any grassy place they may find favourable; the loads are dumped on the ground the men lounge among them, and the animals are turned loose to graze. In this way they cover ten or twelve miles a day, living off the country as they go, and transporting great loads of freight

for distances of eight hundred or a thousand miles. They are always picturesque; the huge piles of bales, the grazing camels, and the hard-bit caravan men, form a picture that will long be remembered.

As we started on our road we met a strange figure. A slender, wasted man, he was, with the thin features and prominent mouth full of large teeth that is typical of the Somalis: he wore also the dress of that people, a white, square sheet worn like a toga, and, as befitted a pilgrim, a great turban. He was a pitiful creature, weak and shaken with fever and so lame that he could walk only with a staff. But he smiled at our greeting and seemed cheerful enough despite his pains, for he had made certain of his soul's salvation. He had made the pilgrimage, from his home by the lower end of the Red Sea, to Mecca and Medina, and thence to the palace of the Kalif himself at Stambul (Constantinople). From there he was journeying homeward, hoping, after many weary days, to reach Bagdad and the tombs of the holy Imams—sectarian differences were nothing to him and a shrine is always a shrine. From Bagdad it is a journey of months at best to his home on the Somali coast, but, *Inshallah*, God willing, he would win back thither, for he trusted in the greatest of talismans, Rahmat Ullah, the mercy of God.

We climbed some insignificant hillocks and a steep slope that led to the top of a broad flat plateau, strewn with rough boulders. It is the

end of a great lava flow which in a distant geological period burst from a crack in the earth's crust and filled a great valley. It is solid basalt, much harder than the surrounding sandstone, and so the Tigris skirts its end, forming a bend across which we were cutting. The surface is nearly level, but broken in places so as to resemble the waves of a sea. There is a good deal of grass upon it, grazed by good-sized flocks and herds, in charge of nomad Kurds whose groups of black tents we frequently encountered. There were also a few villages, but poor and squalid, for their inhabitants are the meanest of the mean, being the serfs belonging to a powerful Agha living at Jezireh-ibn-Omar.

Along the way the stones were often piled into little heaps of six or eight. At first we supposed they were intended to show the road but we learned that was not the case. They seem to be a sort of votive offering erected in thanksgiving for a safe crossing of a ford or the accomplishment of a certain distance, much as Jacob set up his pillar at Bethel. Other piles of stone we encountered also, here and elsewhere, much larger, but always of small stones heaped together carelessly. These mark the grave of someone who met his death by the way—usually by murder—and are constantly added to by passers-by, each of whom is expected to add his stone to the pile. Certain of these places it is unlucky to pass except to the left or the right, an observance that our muleteers always insisted upon our respecting.

As the road comes down again to the Tigris it is extremely picturesque for the banks are very steep where the river runs around the lip of the great basalt flow. High up along these banks runs the road, giving splendid views across the broad waters toward Judi Dagh and other mountains beyond. Thoroughly drenched by the usual afternoon shower, and disturbed by the gradually falling darkness, our muleteers became discouraged, and wished to stop in some village by the way. But we insisted on pressing on to Jezireh-ibn-Omar, which was our proposed stopping place. The poor muleteers raged and wept by turns, but we were obdurate. A rapid little stream in which one of the animals fell among rolling rocks and quicksand took the last bit of fight out of them and we had to take entire charge. We got the poor mule out by placing one man at its halter, one at its tail, and one at each side of the pack. At the word all lifted at once and the struggling feet would do their duty for a few yards. Then down would go the beast again and the operation would have to be repeated, until he finally got his feet on the bank. Then we hurried things up and listened to no complaints despite the stories of swollen streams and a broken bridge.

Down we came to the bed of the river and made our way in the dark amid rocks and a few walled gardens nestled under the high bank. There were several streams that had to be forded but we got all across in safety, no small feat, for the

animals were weary, the streams deep and treacherous, and the men sure we were tempting an awful fate.

About eight o'clock, we came down to a shallow canal spanned by the broken bridge about which we had heard so much. Beyond, the minarets and domes of the little town of Jézireh-ibn-Omar lay black against a sky that was lighted to a pale grey by a clouded moon. We splashed our way across and a *zaptieh* led us through pitch dark streets, swarming with barking dogs, to the inn. Here we hammered on the door, but could get no admittance. The inn was occupied by certain chiefs, the emirs of Bhotan and some of their neighbours, who were planning a revolt against the Turks. Their permission must be obtained before we were admitted. A man with a gun watched us to see that we stayed out, and our *zaptieh* slunk off to the local police post, which had not yet been disturbed by the incipient revolt.

At last we were admitted and rode into a small court-yard flooded with water and crowded with animals. The few decent rooms that the place boasted were of course occupied by the revolutionary chiefs, and we were compelled to seek what shelter we could. It was quite impossible to pitch a tent. We were hungry and tired, quite ready to crawl into any hole that we could find. This proved to be a mud-walled room on one side of the yard, with a flooded, sunken floor and a large pile of very malodorous sheepskins. We flung open

the door and removed the stones that blocked the tiny window. Then we sought something to raise us above the puddle in the floor. Edwin Warfield found one of the benches used in these inns by those who gather to gossip over a cup of tea and a water-pipe. It had only three legs and sagged in the middle, but he thought it was lovely. I removed the door and set it across two of our pack boxes and spread my sleeping-bag on that. Unfortunately my hip kept slipping into the very large and much-patched keyhole at intervals throughout the night. Every time either of us awoke he had a vivid reminder of the unwelcome pile of sheepskins.

CHAPTER X

THROUGH THE GORGES OF THE TIGRIS TO ARMENIA

JEZIREH-IBN-OMAR was once a city of no little importance but it has shared the fate of all the cities of this region and is but a shadow of its former self. It is built largely of black basalt rock, but a good deal of white limestone is used, especially in combination with the basalt. It stands upon a short promontory, protected on the land side by the canal we had forded in the dark. This moat is a splendid breeding ground for mosquitoes, which have given the place a reputation for fever.

The people are of mixed races but largely Hakkiari Kurds, whose costume is the common one on the streets. Of Arabs there are many, for that people once was dominant in this region, and may have furnished most of the inhabitants of this very place, which bears an Arabic name given it in the seventh century. There are also Christians living in the city, both Chaldæans and Jacobites. The former have a bishop to look after them but he has been quite helpless to protect them from

the fierce mountain chiefs of the neighbourhood and the rascally Moslems of the town. So much have they been preyed upon and massacred that they are now reduced to a mean and crafty community of cringing, cowering swindlers. The dealers in the bazaars are mostly Kurds, as are the artisans and tradesmen.

The chief Turkish official is a Kaimakam who can do nothing in the face of the Kurdish chiefs. When we were there he did not dare to appear on the street and was soon after sent packing by the men who had been our fellow-guests at the inn.

Some twenty years ago the chief of these ruffians was one Mustafa Pasha, the chief of a neighbouring Kurdish village whom the Sultan removed from the local jail and made commander of a division of the Hamidieh, the irregular Kurdish cavalry. In this position he so distinguished himself that he earned the hatred of all his neighbours, the love and respect of Abdul-Hamid, and the devotion of his own wild horsemen. With a neighbouring Arab chief, Ibn-Faris, he carried fire and sword into the country to the west of the city, which was entirely Christian, and utterly depopulated a large and fertile region, reducing it to an absolute desert, much to the satisfaction of the insatiable Abdul-Hamid. When he got too dangerous, however, that gentleman kept him within bounds by setting him to fight his own people in the mountains. In this way he came to be at deadly feud with the Shernakh Kurds who live to the south of

A Group of Hakkiari Kurds in the Bhotan Valley

Lake Van, and it was through them that the old rascal met his death.

It was his custom to lead his people to the shores of the lake for the sake of pasturage, which they took, willy-nilly, from the Armenians upon whom the Kurds quartered themselves the while. After a season marked by particularly offensive behaviour and many shocking atrocities, in the year 1902, the invaders were making their way home through the country of their enemies the Shernakh Kurds. These people were ready for them and, though far inferior in numbers, kept up a running fight on Mustafa's party, which was impeded by its women folk, live stock, and loot. At length Mustafa himself led a body of men against a particularly daring picquet of the enemy, which retreated before him, firing as they went. Thinking that he had cleaned out that nest of hornets he paused for a moment to eat, but the pause was fatal, for as he raised his hand to his mouth, he was hit in the head by a bullet fired by the retreating party and instantly killed.

His body was brought to Jezireh, where it was buried in a tomb of the usual mean rubble and plaster construction. Before it the Sultan had a bronze equestrian statue set up, to show how he delighted to honour those who did his dirty work, even though he might be to some extent responsible for their death. The tomb became an object of so much opprobrium from the oppressed townspeople that a guard had to be set over it.

Even so no one passed it without cursing and spitting upon it. As might be expected the statue was torn down as soon as Abdul-Hamid was deposed, and the tomb reduced to ruins.

During his lifetime the town of Jezireh was ruled by his nephew, a man of typical Kurdish character, who used his power to exercise his coarse and brutal sense of humour. He used to hold wild carousings with his intimates, sending his armed retainers to the bazaars or the fields for such things as were necessary, on the theory that the honour of providing for such a gallant man as he was sufficient payment for any one. At these feasts he was wont to call in some of the holiest and gravest *mollahs* and make them dance while he and his tribesmen shouted a wild accompaniment. After one of the wildest of his merry-makings he forced liquor down the throats of certain descendants of the Prophet and rolled them in the mud, turning them out thereafter into the street, where they were pelted by the mob and for ever shamed. The victims of these jolly Kurdish pranks were chiefly Arabs, a people peculiarly ill fitted for seeing that kind of a joke.

The history of Jezireh goes back to Roman times when the place was called Bezabde. In those days there was a bridge here with a strong fortress on the site of the town and at the other end of the bridge, where there is a village today that still bears the ancient name, pronounced Bezabda. One arch of a bridge still stands which may be part

of the very structure that the Persian King Sapor II. captured on his way to the sack of Diyarbekr in 360 A.D. If so the Emperor Julian also crossed it two centuries later on his way to attack another Sapor in his capital at Ctesiphon. Unfortunately there are no inscriptions on the bridge older than Mohammedan times, and the few that are of that period give us no historical information. They are to be seen on some curious white limestone reliefs, set in the black basalt stonework of one of the piers, and the only information each conveys is the name of the sign of the zodiac represented by the relief on which it appears. It is quite reasonable to suppose that the bridge itself does not antedate these reliefs, but was built in the days of the Kalifate. If this be so the older bridge must have been swept away. Be that as it may the ruins of this old arch remain today to illustrate the incompetence of the Turk, who has succeeded in providing no more permanent means of crossing than a bridge of boats, which could be used only in summer and had entirely disappeared at the time of our visit.

Jezireh boasts the ruins of a castle, partly Roman, partly Arab, which has been many times besieged, by Persian, Roman, Byzantine, Mongol, Turk, Kurd, and Arab. It harboured the Emperor Trajan in the second century of our era, when he built there a fleet of boats with which to carry out his campaign against the Parthians, who then held Babylon as their capital. An older fortress stood

on the same site, an outpost of the Assyrian Empire, whose kings only rarely penetrated beyond, into mountainous Urartu, the modern Armenia.

Opposite Jezireh rise the slopes of Jebel Judi, the mountain upon which the people of this region believe the ark of Noah was stranded upon the subsidence of the waters. The peak we know as Ararat has been so named by the Armenians, and regarded by them only as Noah's landing place. The Koran mentions Jebel Judi, and this is not a contradiction to the biblical account but a more accurate specification, for the word Ararat referred not to any particular peak, but to the whole mountain region of Kurdistan and Armenia, for it is identical with the word Urartu. The ancient Chaldæans and Assyrians also looked upon Judi as the real place. They had there a *ziaret*, a high place, where sacrifices were held yearly, and this custom is carried out today among all the races and religions of the surrounding lands.

September 14th, according to our calendar, which in Turkey is the first day of the month Ilul, is the date of the "Sacrifice of Noah," when all feuds sleep and a sort of *pax religiosa* is universally recognized. Kurds, Christians of all sects, Jews, Sabæans, and even outcast Yezidis, all gather together and unite to send toward heaven the smoke of a great sacrifice, commemorating an event older than any of their differences. They dwell in a building that stands on the summit, and is nothing but a great complex of roofless huts,

with walls of roughly laid boulders. Over this the pilgrims spread black tent-cloth as a temporary roof, and live together without jealousy during the period of the sacrifice, Shia and Sunni, Chaldæan and Jacobite. Nestorians from Tyari worship side by side with Barzan and Bohtn Kurds, against whom they are at deadly feud; Chaldæan villagers from the Khabur valley dwell here in the "ship of Noah" with the plundering nomads who drive off their flocks, destroy their crops, and burn their very rooftrees over their heads.

This is an excellent example of the fact that these quarrels are social and political rather than religious. In this part of the East religion is a matter of race not of conviction. The Kurd is necessarily a Moslem; the Armenian professes always the faith of his people; to be an Assyrian is to be a Christian; the Hebrew is always a Jew; and as for the Yezidi, poor fellow, he realizes it is degrading to worship the devil, he is ashamed of his god, and looks forward to a mean reward in the life to come, yet he holds to his religion with the utmost heroism, for it was the faith of his fathers and his race consciousness forbids him to forswear it. So the feud between the Nestorians and the Kurds is really the ancient struggle between Aryan and Semite, the Mede and the Assyrian, that began in the days of Cyrus and Belshazzar. When Abdul-Hamid felt that his exchequer was suffering from the wealth of the Armenians he started a massacre, not because he was anti-

Christian but because he was anti-Armenian. This fact is sufficiently shown by the fact that in places like Diyarbekr where there were both Chaldæans and Armenians, the former, though equally Christian, were untouched; and when refugees from among the latter took sanctuary in the Chaldæan cathedral they were not disturbed, though their own churches were burned over their heads. The reason that these quarrels are so largely on a religious basis is that the simplest way to make trouble and to arouse racial hatreds, here and in all the East, is to call upon the name of God.

We may go a step farther and inquire the reason why differences in religion should be so nicely adjusted that racial rivalry can be constantly cloaked by religious zeal. It is because Christianity took root among the older and more settled peoples, who are therefore the more experienced in commerce and agriculture, to which class the Hebrew also belongs. These people are therefore constantly getting the better of their Moslem conquerors. The agriculturist is always better off than the nomad, therefore the latter plunders him and, as excuse, invokes the name of Allah. The Turk whose ancestors wandered in the deserts of Persia only a few generations ago cannot compete financially or commercially with the Armenian, so he massacres him, rousing the canaille for the work in the name of Islam.

It is not remarkable, therefore, when a religious

In the Tigris Gorge beyond Fenduk

question occupies the centre of the stage, and not a political, that sectarian disagreements should be forgotten and all should unite in a common prayer. I have already described the praying for rain at Mosul when all the people gathered at the shrine of Jonah, regardless of race or faith. This was not an isolated instance but is quite usual under such circumstances.

In the spring of the great massacres at Adana, Van, and elsewhere, there was a gathering of all religions at a particularly sacred shrine near Kharput—seven days' journey west of Jezireh—where a noted *mollah* addressed them. He said that, whether following Mohammed, Moses, or Jesus, they were children of one God, and in time of famine it was meet that they should forget their differences and unite their prayers to the common father to avert the danger that threatened all. It is difficult at first glance to understand the workings of a mind that condones slaughter for religious differences in time of prosperity, and pronounces such sentiments as these in time of need. But it can be done if we are careful to separate racial phenomena that are disguised as religious, and those phenomena that are really religious.

Down at the foot of Jebel Judi is the village called Thamania, the eighty, built by Noah and his companions when they emerged from the ark, and called by the number which tradition ascribes to them. Near it is Noah's tomb and his vineyard,

sad memorial of an unfortunate occasion which has proved an excellent lesson to the present owners, who do not make wine from the grapes, but a kind of treacle which is highly esteemed in this region. Here are all the paraphernalia of the old story, even the mountain, the nearby Jebel Sinjar, upon which the ark is said to have scraped its bottom before it finally grounded.

From Jezireh we pursued our journey up the right—here the southern—bank of the Tigris. We were still on the edge of the basalt while across the river were high, bare hills of steeply tilted limestone and sandstone strata. We made our way along a high and very steep bank of clay, often with cliffs of columnar basalt above. These had been undermined in places and covered the bank with tremendous blocks. The path was very narrow and in places quite washed away, while the whole bank was so soaked with water that it offered only the most dangerous footing. Mud was so deep in places that the mules sank to their knees. We constantly expected some animal to slip and fall down the bank, and so were not surprised when one of them actually did lose his footing and roll over and over down toward the river. He would roll over on his back with his heels waving helplessly in the air; then his pack would come up and he would go over again, while the rapid yellow Tigris was rushing and swirling below. Fortunately he brought up against a rock and we were able to get his pack off and haul him

up again to the path, where he was repacked and led on in safety.

After some ten miles of this sort of going, we came down to a broad stretch of fields and trees, entirely surrounded by hills. Into it the river flows through a wall of basalt and opposite are the high jagged hills known to Xenophon as the mountains of the Carduchi, the mountain barrier that separates Armenia from Mesopotamia. This place is the mouth of the great gorge cut by the Tigris in the basalt flow which extends toward the south for many a mile, forming the plateau of Jebel Tur, or more properly Tur Abdin, the "Mountain of the Servants (of God)," one of the strongholds of the eastern Christian church. The flat fertile area is the silt deposited at the mouth of the gorge by a river whose current is no longer able to carry it. To this point came Xenophon and his ten thousand Greeks on their famous retreat from the defeat at Cunaxa. These men were mercenary troops in the pay of Cyrus the Younger, whose brother Artaxerxes occupied the throne of Persia. It was to oust him that Cyrus led his army of over a hundred thousand men across Asia Minor and down the Euphrates against Babylon. Some distance north of that city he encountered his brother's forces and would have been victorious had he not been killed. As was customary under such circumstances his Oriental troops immediately went over to the King, but no such course was open to the Greeks, who re-

treated northward, up the Tigris, with the combined armies against them. Crossing the river well above the site of modern Bagdad they came to the Great Zab, where the Persian general Tissaphernes called their generals into his camp to arrange terms of peace. They went in full confidence and were slaughtered out of hand.

It is at this moment that Xenophon comes into prominence, for, there by the clear cold waters of the Zab, he was elected to command the little body and lead them to the sea. Up the river they went in search of a ford, crossing it doubtless where the road crossed that ran from Arbela to Nineveh—exactly where we crossed it on our way to Mosul. Passing the ruins of Nineveh, which they did not recognize, they marched on until they came to a "place where the Tigris was quite impassable on account of its depth and width, and where there was no passage along its banks, for the mountains of the Carduchi hung steep over the stream." So they had to leave the river and strike off northward over these very mountains, and the point from which they turned was that broad open place at the mouth of the gorge where we prepared to cross in a ferryboat, under the ancient village of Phœnice, which today is called Finik.

As for the Greeks, they preceded us into the hills, with Cheirisophus leading the light infantry in advance, while Xenophon brought up the rear with the hoplites. All the way to the end of the valley of Bitlis we followed them,—five days'

journey as we travelled,—and then turned off to the right to the lake of Van. They, however, continued to march northward, down the valley of Mush, and so on across mountain and valley until they reached the Black Sea near Trebizond. From there it was no difficult journey back to the shores of the Ægean, where they completed the most dramatic incident in the military history of these lands.

At the ferry that crosses here at Finik we found a picturesque crowd waiting to cross and were delayed some time. We wiled away the time in speech with a Christian merchant, dressed *à la Franga*, who spoke French. He dealt in wool and sheepskins chiefly and—he whispered in confidence—a little smuggled tobacco, now and then.

On the other side were groves of apricot and pomegranate and stone-walled fields, and beyond them a crag crowned with an imposing castle that has been held by garrisons of Assyrians, Armenians, Romans, Parthians, Persians, and doubtless also of Kurds, Arabs, and Turks. At its foot are other ruins and still more are to be found on every commanding hill; for this spot is the most central point in the upper Tigris valley and has been upon the frontiers of many empires.

The castle-crowned crag contains the village of Finik which gives its name to the ferry. Its people are almost entirely of troglodyte habit, for they live in caves hewn in the rock in very ancient times, caves that look out from the rock like

windows overhanging the Tigris. Layard thought they were tombs, but they are so inaccessible from any point below, and so excellently situated to command the valley from a military point of view, that they seem to me to have been intended rather as abodes for the living, more specifically as quarters for a garrison. Much the same arrangement is to be seen in the crags at Van, and at many other centres in the neighbourhood, which have always been fortresses. On account of this analogy I am convinced that these chambers are the work of the Urartians, of whose kingdom I shall have occasion to speak in connection with their capital city of Van. This village of Finik was doubtless a fortress of those people during their struggle against the Assyrians, who certainly must have come by this road when they attacked Van. That these caves were there then I do not doubt and therefore date them eight or nine centuries B.C. Upon these rocks of Finik are also the remains of Parthian reliefs dating from the beginning of the Christian era.

When our animals had crossed in the old tub that served as a ferryboat, we set out to follow Xenophon into the country of the Carduchi. We rode through the pomegranate groves under the cliff where the black cliff-dwellings of Finik stared out, far above our heads.

Soon the path became rougher and steeper, then almost precipitous, and we began to climb the ridge that borders the valley and rises to a height of over

3500 feet, while the river itself is only 1200. The mountain is chiefly white limestone and the cliff we had to climb was weathered smooth and quite slippery with the rain that began to fall as we left the river. Loose boulders added to our difficulties and there was no road whatever, only an occasional scratch on the rock made by the hoofs of animals that had preceded us. Most of the steep places were bare of vegetation, but there was a good deal of scrub oak in sheltered localities. This plant is valuable for the acorns, which are edible, and the galls, from which dyes are made.

Up the steep slope the pack animals had to be pushed and pulled with much yelling, cursing, and complaining on the part of our gallant muleteers. One of them fairly burst into tears when his favourite mule fell and wedged his pack between two rocks so firmly that he was quite helpless and all the efforts of his master at the halter were of no avail. Only two men could get at the fallen creature at once but they managed to dislocate him at last. The man at the tail would jerk upward and forward, then the man at the halter would do the same, seesawing the animal along like the walking-beam of a paddlewheel steamer. Once out of his predicament the mule shook himself well, slipped the loosened pack off his back, and tackled the next slope. Then followed more shouting, much bad language, and strenuous grunts as the pack was lashed firmly in place again.

At last we reached the top of the ridge and

went on over its top by a fairly well-marked path that runs amid boulders and hawthorn scrub. Just as the sun was setting we rounded the western end of the mountain and came into a wide, semi-circular theatre, bounded by sharp cliffs but looking out toward the west over the flat top of the great lake of basalt, the Tur Abdin, and the ravine cut through it by the Tigris. The clouds had fortunately lifted and we could see across the plateau for miles. It is like a great sea with islands here and there which were mountains around which the lava flowed when it emerged from some huge crack in the surface and filled the valleys about their bases.

Across the top of this plateau the Tigris once ran, falling over the edge at Finik in a great waterfall. But it soon began to cut back, and so formed the gorge which lay spread out before us. Still it is constantly labouring to upset the balance of nature by piling up sediment in the lower valleys. Year by year it is extending the dry land farther and farther into the Persian Gulf, and raising the level of Mesopotamia. It is this great weight of sediment that caused the earth's crust to buckle, and formed the fissure from which came the lava flow that now contributes its share of sediment and will continue to do so until the stress again becomes too great. Then there will be a renewal of volcanic activity in this already heavily scarred land until a true balance is restored.

The village that stands in the centre of this

mountain theatre is called Fenduk, and there we stopped for the night. It was a typical Hakkiari village, climbing up a steep slope, with tiers of houses arranged like steps. So close is this resemblance that each man's roof serves as a front yard for his neighbour above, while he himself drives his cattle out on the roof of his lower neighbour, whence they jump down to the next roof and the next and so reach the stream that furnishes the water-supply, which is almost always below, where it receives all the village drainage. The walls are of roughly laid stone and the roofs of poles and brushwood covered with mud. Whenever the sun is hot the roof bakes and cracks, so a stone roller is always at hand to render it water-tight when rain threatens. On each roof is a ladder leading up to the next, made either by cutting notches in a pole, nailing slats across it, or simply cutting off the branches six inches from the trunk of a small tree and using the butts for steps. A Kurdish matron usually does her cooking on her neighbour's roof and spreads out her laundry upon it.

There was no inn in the village, but we found a place to stable our horses, a long low building in bad repair, such as is usually provided for strangers in a Kurdish village. We ourselves climbed up over several roofs and found lodging in the house of one of the chief men. He with his wife and children slept in an inner room—furnished only with felt mats and a few quilts; we slept in a front

room adjoining another which was occupied by a donkey, two cows, and several goats and sheep; outside the door was a sort of covered porch where Asoufi and the *zaptiehs* made themselves comfortable. As soon as we arrived we began to have callers, and before long the wall was lined with stolid-faced men in the picturesque mountain costume. They were quiet and courteous, however, and we could get them to talk but little, answering all questions by yes and no. Our field of conversation was limited, for they spoke only their native language.

When we had dined, they left us and we spread our sleeping-bags side by side on the floor as was our custom. During the night our rest was broken by two squalling cats that indulged in a fight on our feet, and had it out, back and forth, until driven off by an avalanche of boots. These animals are quite common in this country and often great pets. It is a very strange sight to see a fiercely mustachioed Kurd, with a silver-mounted dagger in his belt, and a double row of rifle cartridges around his waist, gently stroking a purring pussy, and addressing serious remarks to it in his guttural language. I have seen such a man take out a cartridge from his belt and roll it across the floor for the cat to pursue, doing it all with the gravest dignity as if it were some solemn obligation. This affection for the feline race was not shared by Edwin Warfield, who was ever seeking some means of excluding them from his society.

Preparing to Cross the Bhotan Su on a Raft of Skins

One night he set a bucket of water in the doorway of the room in which we slept, in the hope that it. would prove an obstacle to their entrance. Some hours later he awoke and glanced toward the door. A beam of moonlight lit up the bucket and also the forms of three cats placidly drinking from it.

We left Fenduk early the next morning and rode through the cool of the morning along the face of the ridge we had climbed the day before. From the gorge below rose a long rope of mist that was broken by a cold wind and hustled away across the plateau of Tur Abdin. After a time we began to descend slowly, almost imperceptibly. We passed a tiny mountain village once in a great while, but travellers we saw not at all. The picturesque features of the road were the ravines it crossed, down which roared good-sized torrents, swollen by the constant rain. These places are always heavily wooded and either inhabited or bearing evidence of having been. There are often reliefs and undecipherable inscriptions to be found, and in one place a little group of rock-hewn chambers like those of Finik.

They are situated a few rods above the road in a spot about four hours from Fenduk half hidden by a dense willow growth. Below are the remains of a bridge that once spanned the stream, which now must be forded. We found it dangerous on account of rolling stones that filled the ford and a deep pool just below. We crossed in safety, however, and so did all the pack animals except the

donkeys that served the muleteers as mounts. They were up to their necks in the rapid stream and looked like drowned rats. One of them was swept clear away and retrieved out of a hole between two rocks where he had stuck; but the others got across, carefully sponsored by their masters, who kept a firm hold on their tails in the water and encouraged them with loud cries that re-echoed up the ravine.

Our muleteers were greatly impressed with the dangers and difficulties of this route and objected to the side excursions which we were accustomed to make, leaving the caravan to clamber among the rocks. On one occasion Edwin Warfield became so exasperated with one of them who insisted upon his following a certain path when he wished to examine another, that he abandoned all attempts to make himself understood in Arabic and fell back briefly but emphatically into English. There are certain expressions in that language which fit almost any such occasion and seem to be understood by all peoples.

In the afternoon we came down again to the Tigris, which makes a great bend in the gorge below a corner which we had cut off by going through Fenduk. The valley which we now entered was of great beauty because of its ruggedness and vastness. The river runs across the ridges which are formed of alternate layers of hard and soft rock that is readily undermined by the river, breaking off thereafter in large blocks. The result

is that the ends of the ridges overhang the river with sharp cliffs, seamed with narrow ledges. Along such ledges we made our way around the face of the ridges, turning up the valleys between to find a place to ford the streams that rushed down them. Often we had to climb far up on the steep cliffs, over slippery rocks, zigzaging from ledge to ledge, in order to find a place wide enough to serve as a road.

In places there were villages, either climbing up the steep face of a ridge or nestling between in a place where a bit of flat land offered a little room for cultivation. The tops of hills were often sparsely scattered with scrub oaks and hawthorns, but the little side valleys were often quite beautiful with groves of poplar and willow and little patches of cultivation. In one we found a high-arched bridge in very good repair and a plain stone mill hidden away in the midst of carefully cultivated poplars. To get into the valley we had to wind down a steep slope on the south side and immediately ascend from ledge to ledge to a height of several hundred feet on the north; then we were able to round the face of the ridge on a narrow ledge that literally overhung the river.

An incident of this day may be worth relating as illustrating the preparedness of these people for anything like danger. We stopped on top of one of the cliffs, under a hawthorn bush, to eat our meagre tiffin of bread and cheese. Edwin Warfield pointed out a stone on a ledge opposite which needed

only a touch to send it into the river, and proposed to start it off with a rifle bullet. He took aim and fired. Just as the shot rang out, and while the sound was still echoing among the cliffs, we heard a shrill cry just behind us, a rush of hoofs, and the sound of a few falling stones. We stood up and looked over the rock that had served us as a back, for the shepherd whom we had thus rudely disturbed. But there was no sign of him or his flock. At the sound of the rifle, which meant danger to him, he had not stopped to inquire, but had rushed off with his woolly charges to some secret hiding-place among the rocks.

We came down at sunset to a village situated on a hill rising above some stony fields of young barley. There we received hospitality in the house of the chief man, which was by the side of the road on the lowest tier. The room we occupied was evidently kept for strangers for it showed no signs of other occupancy. The people were very pleasant and gathered around with a great show of interest. Edwin Warfield sat for some time, with elders of the village, upon a prominent dunghill, displaying his prowess with the rifle. Our *zaptiehs* looked on with the greatest approval and Asoufi's powers as interpreter were sorely taxed.

When we were retiring for the night we found that we had unwelcome visitors in the shape of a pair of pretty but restless cats. Edwin Warfield had, by this time, made quite a study of how to keep these animals at a distance. His *modus*

The Potter's Quarter in Sert from the Khan

operandi on this occasion was to pick them up whenever they came in reach and hurl them playfully but forcibly into my face, a process which he knew would not fail to excite retaliation, and as the cat was the most convenient missile, the cat naturally suffered. This drastic treatment effectively discouraged our visitors and their sworn enemy went peacefully to sleep, thinking of what he would do if they appeared again.

The chill mountain wind came hurtling down the gorge and began to freeze the damp mud walls of the room. Little showers of clay began to flake off and rattle sharply on the canvas of our sleeping-bags. Edwin Warfield never doubted for a minute that the sound was of feline origin and responded by drowsily calling "Shoo! Shoo!"

Finally a very large shower fell and he was reminded of the box of crackers left out the night before, and after shooing fiercely said, regretfully but resignedly, "There go our crackers."

"Crackers nothing," said I, "it's only the wall," An electric torch revealed the cracker box intact and the darkest corners free from cats. Then we buttoned up our bags, closed the flaps over our heads, and let it rain mud walls all night.

The next day we kept along the bank for a while and then followed a track that wandered over the end of a ridge, past a pretty little mud village lost amid a grove of tall slender poplars. This soon brought us down into the valley of the Bohtan Su, one of the most important affluents of the

Tigris, that rises in the heart of the Kurdish mountains. We found the valley quite spacious at first, running between two lofty ridges. But it soon narrowed down and we came to a place where the river had cut through the ridges. This point marked the beginning of one of the most beautiful gorges in Turkey. The walls became steeper and steeper until we came to the Zorava Chai, which flows into the larger stream from the east, just above where the Keser Su enters from the west. The space between these affluents is the natural point at which to cross, and there we found a ferry in charge of some wild-looking Kurds.

As we came down to the ferry we had on one side the Zorava valley, commanded by a picturesque, castle-crowned village, on the other the Bohtan Su, considerably more than a hundred yards in width, that flowed by with a tremendous current and flashed around a curve where, as we had seen, it received the Keser Su, with a swirling of waters that resembled a tide-rip. As we considered the general aspects of the situation we wondered whether one of the old arks used in this country for ferryboats would be able to negotiate such a crossing. But the contrivance that was provided to get us to the other side compared as favourably with one of those arks, as the ark would with a Hudson River ferry.

It was a small *kelek* formed by twenty inflated sheepskins, supporting a rude platform of sticks, about ten feet long and six feet wide. It was

View of the Town of Sert

guided by two sweeps, poles with blades of split sticks, worked from one end. Preparatory to taking us over the old ferryman went over the skins, inflating some that had become soft, by means of a reed. Then our baggage and pack-saddles were piled on and carried across in three instalments, while we were carried with the lightest load. The donkeys were towed after the raft by their halters but the larger animals had to be made to swim.

The man who saw to them was a handsome young Kurd of excellent physique and one of the best swimmers I have ever seen. He took off his shirt and drawers, the only clothes he was wearing, and wrapped them like a turban around his conical hat. Then with the assistance of ferrymen and muleteers he got the animals, in a group, as far into the water as they would go. When they absolutely balked at the swiftness of the current and turned to go back, he seized the foremost by the mane and forced him into the current, getting him well started. Then he left him in midstream, swam back and got another, while the men on shore kept the terrified animals in the water by splashing and throwing stones, not to mention the wild shouting that invariably accompanies motion in the East. When a few of the animals got started, the others were more easy to drive and began to swim across of their own accord. Many were swept down a good half mile, but none were carried around the curve, whence they would never have returned.

While we were thus engaged a Turkish officer came down, going in the opposite direction. His mount was a splendid white stallion that was terrified at the very thought of entering the stream. But the way that naked Kurd handled him was superb. He rode him into the water until the frightened beast was lifted clear by the current. Then they both went under, bobbing up at intervals until the struggling horse found out how to use his legs. Then they began to make headway, the shouts of the man reaching us above the roar of the waters. On they went across the stream, the big horse plunging frantically and the man holding firmly to his mane. Then they reached the other side and dashed up on the bank, where the horse began to crop the grass, while the man slipped off, shook out his shirt and drawers, and donned them before joining the men who were getting the raft ready for our last load.

Leaving the ferry we went on up the river, entering a ravine with tremendously lofty precipitous sides. The colouring was very striking, for while one side was white limestone almost entirely, the other was of red and green serpentine broken in places by large dikes of black basalt. As we ascended the ravine became a mere cleft in the mountains, and we began to feel that we could never get out. But there were many passers-by and we were reassured on that point.

Gradually the path grew narrower and narrower and the footing more and more precarious, until it

An Ornamented Gateway at Sert

gave out altogether and the path began to wind up the face of the cliff. It was a perfectly heart-breaking climb of 1200 feet up a zigzag ascent over smooth limestone. We climbed up ledges that shelved downwards at an astonishing angle and rounded corners that it seemed impossible any animal could make without toppling off. But they did, and we came on past a couple of picturesque shrines up to the plateau of Sairt, 2800 feet above the sea.

As soon as we had reached the top of the cliff the gorge was lost sight of and before us lay a stretch of rolling country, the top of the limestone, with rounded hills beyond topped by a magnificent array of snow-capped peaks. In the middle distance was the town of Sairt and to it we came late in the afternoon, winding through its streets to a well built and comfortable khan. Here we found a second-storey room, neatly white-washed and boasting two windows of good size. Before the door was a wide porch over the stables whence we could see over the opposite wall to a barracks, occupied by a few soldiers. When we had gotten comfortably arranged we set out as usual to look at the town, and found it both well looking and pleasant.

It is a limestone city, with many two- and three-storeyed buildings, well furnished with windows. The roofs are flat, the walls all lean slightly inward and are covered with a thick lime plaster. The principal mosque is small and insignificant.

The dome is very squat and ugly, and the minaret is shapeless and so far from vertical that it is a marvel that it stands at all. Both are ornamented by a score or so of Dresden dinner plates and saucers, stuck in the plaster at irregular intervals, in lieu of tiles. There is an interesting quarter behind the khan occupied by potters. The roofs are all either domed or vaulted. Under each dome is a potter's wheel and under each vault a furnace, while the narrow streets are cluttered with amphoræ and bowls of freshly baked clay.

The people are mostly Mohammedans, who are all Kurds, but there are also a good many Christians, both Chaldæans and Nestorians. The former are looked after by a Dominican Mission which has a considerable settlement on a hill above the town.

One of the most striking features of the architecture was some gateways in walls that surrounded a number of court-yards, in different parts of the city. These are of limestone beautifully carved with designs which I feel sure are native Kurdish, although they certainly show outside influence. They are mostly of intricate lacework, with a symmetry that suggests the Persian, but carried out in a style I have not seen in Persia. They are superior to both the Christian and Moslem work of Mosul.

We were shown about Sairt by two police officers who spoke enough French to get along very nicely. They were natives of the place, one a Moslem and the other a Chaldæan. They showed

The Bridge over the Keser Su on the Way to Bitlis

us the greatest courtesy and when we returned to the inn we sat and talked for a long time.

The next day we set out over some extremely rugged country for Bitlis and the border of Armenia. On leaving Sairt we soon got into some rugged hills of green and red serpentine, a colouring that added greatly to the beauty of the views. Soon we began to ascend and made one of those stiff climbs that had come to be of almost every-day occurrence. With much pushing and tugging we got to the top. Here we met a man in European dress whom we took for a Russian newspaper correspondent, whom we were told was expected that day in Sairt. But the man proved to be an Albanian official. While we were talking with him the Russian turned up, a short stout man, in Tyrolean hunting costume, attended by a Circassian in the full costume of that people. He was greatly excited over the threatened revolt of the Bohtan chiefs, which he had come down to witness. I fear he was greatly disappointed when we told him that all was quiet in Sairt. His account of the road was far from encouraging, but we pressed on and came down the other side of the ridge we had climbed, into the valley of the Keser Su.

This river is not very large so far up, and here flows between the ridges. It is crossed by a picturesque bridge of four arches of greatly varying size and shape. Beyond it the path led past a tiny little village into a jumble of red and green hills.

Here the path practically gave out in many places and we could find our way only by occasional traces. At times we traversed the face of a perfectly smooth cliff along a trace, not wider than a man's foot, worn in the friable rock by the hoofs of passing caravans. We often expected to see the whole caravan go sliding down into the roaring torrent below, as was not strange, for our imaginations were occasionally quickened by the sight of a little pile of bones or a grinning skull, showing where some former wayfarer had lost an animal. There were graves of men, too, marked by rough cairns, where passing muleteers rarely fail to cast a stone, by way of propitiating the spirit, so that their own party may pass in safety.

Later in the evening we came to a hollow with a steep slope on one side covered with thick meadow grass, and tiny rills that trickled from numerous springs. Above the springs was a little Kurdish village and there we stopped for the night. We pitched our tents in a little field of grass while our muleteers found lodging in the village.

The next day we went on, climbing higher and higher, in order to cross the ridge that separates the Keser Su from the Bitlis Su, a river that joins it some distance below Sairt. This ridge is over seven thousand feet high and was covered with snow on that April day.

Despite the difficulties of the road we passed several caravans, chiefly loaded with tobacco, which is the most important commodity in the

In the Valley of the Bitlis Su

inter-provincial trade of Turkey. There were often fifty or a hundred animals, mules or horses, in a caravan, looked after by wild-looking Kurdish muleteers, many of them showing by their dress that they belonged to one of the Persian tribes. They were journeying through Sairt to Diyarbekr from Bitlis and Mush.

As we reached greater altitudes our difficulties were increased by the alternately frozen and muddy ground. Our animals, poor enough to start with, were utterly worn out and constantly had to halt for breath. Not infrequently one or another fell on one of the steep ascents, but fortunately not in a very dangerous place.

The top of the pass by which we crossed was quite deep in snow and the road was rendered doubly dangerous by the ice. The views were picturesque but generally bare. The stunted oaks that filled the protected valleys were innocent of leaf, but the spring flowers underfoot were in blossom right up to the snow line. There were crocuses, hyacinths, tulips, and several sorts of iris, and on the farther side a few beautiful beds of asphodel and little blue and yellow woodland blossoms of various kinds. In one place we came upon a little square of fertile ground, an acre or so in extent, surrounded by rough boulders. It was situated on the very summit of a high ridge whence we had a beautiful view of hills coloured in various tones of green, dark green rocks and the lighter shades of new flushed pastures and budding trees.

But the crowning glory of this place was not the view, which was forgotten in the sight of hundreds of gracefully nodding white narcissi. Our muleteers admired them as much as we and plucked a bunch for each of us.

Once over the pass we came down by steep icy paths to the Bitlis valley and crossed the narrow roaring torrent of the Bitlis Su by a high-arched bridge. Beyond it a steep path led up a green bank to a fine metalled road. Up it we marched about fifteen miles to Bitlis, keeping constantly along the banks of the stream. The valley varied greatly in width; usually it was sharp and narrow, but often there was a wide space with very fair little meadows in it. The right bank was composed of green serpentine, the relic of some very old volcanic eruption. The left bank however was almost always lined by cliffs of columnar basalt, a comparatively recent flow from the huge crater of Nimrud Dagh which stands at the head of the valley. This flow filled the valley at a time when the river was much larger than now, and cut off all the drainage from Lake Van that once ran into it. The present stream has not made great headway against it but has cut its way between it and the serpentine wall of the older valley.

From every point there were beautiful views of snow-capped peaks rising high above the valley, which is itself five thousand feet above sea level. There was plenty of snow everywhere but not so much as to make travel difficult. Another pro-

A Striking Deposit Made by a Hot Spring across the Road in Bitlis Valley

minent feature was the constant appearance of mineral springs containing iron, sulphur, and various salts, and often strongly charged with carbonic acid gas. When heavily charged with iron they often resembled bloody gashes on the hillside.

The most striking of all was one of which the waters are so heavily charged with lime that they have built up a ridge thirty feet high, and so thick and steep that the road has to pass through a tunnel in it. Above the modern tunnel is one said to date from Assyrian times. It is called "the gate of Semiramis" and is said to have been cut by that Queen when she made a road that passed through it on the way to Van where she had a summer home.

Quite late in the afternoon the valley began to open out and then suddenly contracted, forming a gate which is the entrance to the spider-shaped hollow in which Bitlis is located. Through this gate we went and up among the lava-built houses to be cordially received by the little group of American missionaries.

CHAPTER XI

BITLIS AND LAKE VAN

THE situation of Bitlis is striking and unique, surrounded as it is by a coronal of high rounded hills. The hollow in which the city is built is formed by two large convergent streams which flow out down the valley below, enhanced by several smaller torrents dashing down from the valleys that radiate from the common centre, like the legs of a spider. Overlooking the confluence of the streams, is a commanding rock, its top covered by the ruins of a castle. The bottom below is flagged with flat roofs, above which rise a few clumsy minarets and the dome of a mosque. All around the houses rise in tiers up the sides of the hollow, and above them are vineyards, graveyards, and poplar groves. The houses, though well provided with windows, are square-built and featureless, built of stone, from the great lava flow that once filled the valley. The material is cut from parts of the flow that have cooled rapidly and so are porous and easily sawed into cubical blocks, whence the regularity of the lines of all the buildings and the sense of precision that is

characteristic of the city. When first cut the stones are black; but so rich are they in readily oxidized compounds of iron that they soon weather a dark brown, a process that is hastened by the wash from the mud roofs. Like the roofs in the villages these are made of mud laid on poplar or willow poles, and have to be kept rolled to prevent their cracking from the heat of the sun. A conspicuous feature of the city is the high stone walls surrounding gardens and the compounds of the better houses. In Bitlis every man's house is his castle in very truth, and it would require a goodly charge of gun-cotton to force the outer defences. The houses of some of the wealthier Armenians are guarded with gates like those of Rothenberg, protected by not unskilfully constructed barbicans. If the doorkeeper has fallen asleep or gone on an errand it is almost impossible to gain access to such a building, as we frequently discovered.

The city of Bitlis is the gate of Armenia. Below are the rugged ranges of Kurdistan and to the north the broad valleys of ancient Urartu. Through Bitlis Tiglath Pileser came when the Assyrian arms first appeared on Lake Van, and the old castle that doubtless stood in ancient times on the rock in the centre of the city must often have been a bone of contention between the native Urartians and their Assyrian enemies. But the first historical mention of a castle at Bitlis dates from the days of Alexander. In this connection a legend

has come down to us which attempts to explain the origin of the name of the city.

It is said that Alexander sent one of his generals, Lais by name, with orders to build an impregnable fortress on the site of modern Bitlis. This the general did with a right good will, finding himself all-powerful in this remote region. Later Alexander wished to pass down the valley to the Tigris, but was refused by his quondam servant. So he attacked the fortress, and though unable to carry it by storm, succeeded in reducing Lais to such straits that he sued for pardon. When Alexander asked him the meaning of his revolt he explained: "Your Majesty bade me build an impregnable fortress, which I did. Then I sought a means of proving to your Majesty how well the orders were executed. How better could this be done than by resisting the attack of the great Alexander?"

So pleased was the Macedonian that he forgave Lais after rebuking him, calling him bad. Then he ordered that the place should be called by the name of the sinner, Bad Lais, which has softened to Bitlis.

Unfortunately this legend has no backing in historical fact and is either made of whole cloth or wrongly attributed to Alexander. The known history of Bitlis castle dates from the Mongol conquest under Tamerlane in 1400. He appointed a governor over the Hakkiari mountains named Amir Kara Othman (Othman the Black Chief).

He established his capital at Bitlis and married the daughter of one of the powerful Hakkiari chiefs. He adopted the dress and manners of that tribe, and set himself up as their chief and independent ruler, with the title of Prince. His line continued in power for four centuries and a half, defying Turk and Persian from their commanding stronghold, and now and then forming an alliance with one or the other, or acknowledging a nominal suzerainty.

Under these princes Bitlis became a very important centre, and furnished some brilliant men both to Turkey and Persia, notably Edrisi, the famous vizier of Sultan Selim. To their strength the Hakkiari tribe owes its preponderance in Turkish Kurdistan. So widely did they extend their rule into Armenia and Persia as almost to be worthy the name of a second Median empire.

They fell in 1849, however, when the Turkish government concentrated its energies upon reducing the Kurds and destroying the strongholds from which many of their leaders were in the habit of defying authority in remote parts of the mountains. Sharif Bey, the last of the line of Othman, held out in his castle for years but was finally dislodged by Turkish guns from the surrounding heights. His capital is now the seat of a Turkish Vali who rules the surrounding Kurds with a force of Albanian troops and Turkish *zaptiehs*. The castle was recently levelled off at the top by a progressive Vali in pursuance of some plan he had

not the means to carry out. But much of its massive masonry still stands as a conspicuous memorial to the Black Othman and his successors.

As a result of this long Kurdish occupation only about twenty per cent. of the population is Armenian. And it is this part that controls the trade of the city, for the Kurd is no business man. Thus a deep-seated jealousy has arisen between the two peoples which makes Bitlis a rich soil for Abdul-Hamid's seed of massacre. It has been one of the first places to suffer in all the great massacres, and has had little outbreaks of its own. For instance a Vali wished to build new bazaars to replace the old ones, largely of wood, that dated from before the days of Turkish rule. They were almost entirely in the hands of the Armenians, who must be got rid of before their shops could be torn down. To do this by fair play would be expensive, for the Turk is no better bargainer than the Kurd. So the beneficent Vali sent his soldiers into the bazaars to set them on fire. When the flames burst out, looting began and no Armenian was allowed to carry off any of his goods. If any sought to defend their property they were promptly knifed and their bodies thrown into the fire. The ruins that remained presented a scene of the utmost desolation, and the Vali being soon after recalled, they were not rebuilt until the Armenians succeeded in once more winning back their goods from their Moslem neighbours. A few were still in ruins at the time of our visit, owing to the great reduc-

tion of the Armenian population by massacre and emigration.

The Armenians live in their own quarters, on the outskirts of the city, where they are fairly well able to protect themselves. But their shops are in the heart of the Moslem section. There they are trapped like rats when a massacre breaks out, and slaughtered before they can reach their homes.

On the day of our arrival in Bitlis a Kurd had been murdered in a low brawl. His friends, the meanest ruffians in the city, carried the body to the Vali and demanded vengeance on the Armenians, whom they accused of doing the deed. After the manner of Turks the Vali temporized. Luckily the murder was at night and the trouble began before the Armenians had opened their shops. So they all remained in terrified concealment in their own quarters. The Vali was evidently under orders from Constantinople to avoid trouble, for he kept the streets patrolled by *zaptiehs* wherever there were Armenian houses. But even so three Armenians were killed or wounded during the day, and another was brutally assaulted with a hatchet late in the evening, while going to another quarter to look after the safety of his sister. Two days more passed in great trepidation, no one knowing whether the Kurds would break out or not. There were meetings in all the Armenian churches to petition the Vali and the Sultan. These gatherings several times called our missionary hosts to advise or

act as go-betweens in communicating with the Vali.

The upshot of the matter was that several Armenians were arrested, and quiet restored. Before we left we had the satisfaction of seeing the frightened Christians go back to their places of business in the bazaar. It was a narrow escape, however, for the Kurds of Bitlis are very turbulent. A few months later they attacked the Vali and his troops in force, but were repelled by machine guns, despite the fact that their leader, Sheikh Selim of Hizan, promised them invulnerability. The fact that this Mollah Selim found sanctuary in the Russian consulate after the defeat of his followers is significant. There can be little doubt that the attack was fostered by the representatives of the Czar, whose aim is to keep Armenia as disturbed as may be, to facilitate its being annexed to Holy Russia.

At the time of our visit in April the hills around Bitlis were covered with snow, which also lay in masses in many of the streets. This is a country of heavy snowfall and the citizens enjoy the comfortable privilege of shovelling all superfluous accumulations from the roofs into the streets, many of which are quite blocked to all but foot traffic until May. The levels of all are raised to the tops of the walls, which would make it dangerous for the Armenians, but for the fact that the local Moslems are a cowardly set and do not attack the Christians unless reinforced by the

wilder villagers, who are hopelessly snowed in during the winter. On account of the melting snow and the altitude (Bitlis is 5100 feet above the sea) the air was chill except at midday when the April sun warmed things up except in the narrow, shaded streets.

The Armenians have as a rule adopted European, or *à la Franga*, clothes. But they have an Oriental air in spite of them because of the fez and a certain way of wearing their uncreased trousers and ill-fitting coats. Their manners too are Oriental. When they sit on a chair they thrust their feet under it as do all Orientals because of having been brought up to squat on their heels. They keep their eyes straight in front of them and their hands in their laps except when they use them to gesture; the gestures too are all Oriental. We met one or two men who had been in America and learned Western ways. They were the wealthiest members of the community; their trousers were creased, they wore collars, looked us in the eye in conversation, laughed as we do, shook hands as we do, used their hands and feet as we do, sneezed as we do, in fact were an excellent example of the adaptability of the Armenian. Those we met were men of influence in the community, respected by their fellows and handled with gloves on by the Turks.

The Armenians in the villages are quite unlike their city-dwelling fellows in many ways. The latter are generally slender and ill-muscled, often

tall, with meagre chests, light skin, and rather clear-cut features. But the peasants are short men, stocky and deep-chested, with dark, heavy, often sullen faces. They are slow where the townsman is quick, simple where he is full of guile, stubborn where he may be easily convinced, cheerful and forgiving where he will nurse a hidden grudge. These differences are doubtless due to some deeper cause than environment. Armenia has been swept by invasion after invasion. Scythians, Parthians, Mongols, and Turks have all passed through their valleys and many have been left behind to take the place of depopulated villages. All these except the Turks were pagans and so easily absorbed by the Christian population, whose religion and customs they have adopted and upon whom they have set the stamp of their race. As a result the Armenian peasant inherits little enough from the original Aryan invaders except his language, which is now full of Turanian forms.

The city dwellers have also suffered from a dilution of the old Aryan blood, but in a different way. They are the most skilful traders in the Near East, a trait that is characteristic of the Semitic race. We know that the Assyrians held several Armenian cities for some time, and I do not doubt that a strong admixture of Semitic blood took place then. In later times numbers of Jews migrated to Armenia. Several thousand were settled at one time in Van to take the place of a large body of citizens massacred by Tamerlane. These bodies

have all disappeared into the mass of the Armenian people, and the result is that Semitic peculiarities of character and physiognomy are to be noted everywhere. There is therefore a great difference between the city and country Armenian, which is one of the great impediments to a united Armenia.

The peasants wear much the same costume as their Kurdish neighbours, just as do the Assyrian Christians of Kurdistan. Their felt hats, instead of being dome-shaped, are conical and adaptable to more uses than that of covering the head. A member of the American mission, our hostess at Bitlis, a very charming old lady who has spent her life in Turkey, went out into the country to get milk for a sick lady at the mission. She insisted on having the cow milked into her own pail—carefully sterilized—while she looked on to make sure that no impurities were allowed to get into it. When the pail was full, she began to count out the money to pay for the milk, from which for the moment she removed her eyes. The peasant woman did not want the milk to go to the good American lady without being strained. So she snatched the conical felt cap from the head of her young son, and proceeded to strain the milk through it. She could never understand why her customer left in such disgust.

The simplicity of the Armenian peasant and his inability to drive a bargain is excellently illustrated by an incident of our stay in Bitlis. A boy brought in the carcase of a wild boar which his father had

killed in the river valley. He had it carefully concealed in sacking so as to resemble a bag of fodder, for he would have been instantly attacked, and very likely killed, were it known that he was bringing such an abomination into the city. He offered the quarry to one of the missionaries.

"How much do you want for it?" asked that gentleman.

"What?" said the boy stupidly.

"You want to sell it do you not? What sum of money do you expect to receive?"

"Oh!" said the boy with a surprised laugh, "if you ask me, I would very much like to get a *lira* [$4.40] for it."

"No, no!" said the American, "I will give you a *mejid* [eighty cents] for it."

"Very well," said the boy, "I thank you."

He went off perfectly satisfied leaving the splendid big boar with the missionary. The chine became the *pièce de résistance* at a dinner at which we were the guests of honour, while the story of its acquisition was equally relished by all present.

The Moslems of Bitlis, being mostly Kurds, dress almost entirely in the Hakkiari costume. The streets are rendered picturesque by the groups of men in shaggy goatskin jackets, bright-coloured baggy trousers, and domed or conical felt hats. As is the case in most Moslem cities the principal mosque, dating from the days of the Kalifate, is in the centre of the city, surrounded by the bazaars and Moslem quarters. The Armenian churches

are forced out into the outskirts and the monasteries are still farther away.

There are three sects of Armenians, all recognized by the government as subject millets, and all represented in Bitlis. The Gregorian is the "orthodox" Armenian with its centre in Echmiadzin in Russian territory. It gets its name from the founder of the church, Gregory the Illuminator, who was sent by the bishop of Cappadocia in the third century to preach Christianity to the then pagan Armenians. Corruption in this old church and neglect of its Turkish followers gave the Roman Catholics an opportunity to found the Catholic Armenian church under much the same conditions as the Uniat Syrian churches. Finally there is the Protestant Armenian church for which the American missionaries are responsible. Although Protestant it remains Armenian in membership and government.

The American mission is doing a splendid work in Bitlis especially in its schools for boys and girls which are attended by Armenians of all sects. The spread of education is the hope of Armenians both in Turkey and Russia, and it is a great satisfaction to know that they are getting it chiefly in American schools and colleges.

I had the pleasure of speaking to an intelligent looking group of boys, a hundred or more, in the boys' school at Bitlis. Most of them were not advanced enough to understand English, which necessitated the assistance of the principal, Mr.

George Knapp, as interpreter. But even so they listened with a great show of interest to what I had to say, and with perfect courtesy, although it was just before the noon hour when all schoolboys are restless.

There are several Armenian monasteries in the environs of Bitlis, a few of which we visited. They are picturesque but forbidding, with heavily walled compounds, terminated at one end by a massive fortified gateway, and at the other by a cruciform church with an octagonal cupola. To gain access to one of these churches we had to crawl through low openings in massive walls, pass through high vaulted chambers, and thread a crooked corridor. Persecution and repeated plundering has taught these people caution.

Down the valley a short way, out of sight of the city, is a monastery used today like many another in Armenia as an orphanage for the shelter of the children of those killed in the recent massacres. It has stood several sieges successfully, and is still jealously guarded against Moslem ill-will. Patches of melting snow lay in the fields before it, but the plantations of poplars were budding and the exposed slopes were spangled with spring flowers. Upon this peaceful scene frowned the dark, unbroken walls of the monastery, rendered gloomier still by the white mountains beyond. Two huge mastiffs, resembling the dogs of St. Bernard, dashed out at us with a chorus of fierce barks. A group of youngsters gathered

upon the roof, the great door of heavy iron-studded planks was thrown open, and a crowd rushed out to greet us, some smiling, some gaping, but all bowing politely, cap in hand. A pleasant old priest, short and broad-shouldered, met us at the door with the kindest cordiality, showing great respect to our escort, Mr. Knapp. We passed through a long entrance way into the court. In front stood the church with its octagonal cupola, and opposite it was the building used for the cells of the brothers and their charges.

The church was small and simple. Within were a few paintings on the walls and no furniture beyond a rail separating the tawdrily decorated altar from the congregation. This rarely consists of more than the orphans and a few servants, who are content to squat on their heels during service.

We accompanied the priest to his cell where we were served the usual tiny cups of Turkish coffee. The boys who waited on us, round-faced and rosy cheeked, showed the greatest respect for their masters and were courteous and quiet. One little fellow, we were told, was the son of a man who had been greatly respected by the leading Moslems. In the outbreak of 1907 he had been caught in the bazaars. His friends found him and begged him to wrap a cloth, which they offered, around his fez, a Mohammedan custom that would have saved him. But he refused and a moment later was killed by ruffians from whom his friends were powerless to protect him. Another boy had lost his father in

the attempt to defend a monastery which had been forced and looted. We learned also that there were many children there whose parents were unknown. They had been picked up in the streets or found in looted houses, too young to know who they were. Two of the children had been turned over to the monks by kindly Moslem women after they had been taken, doubtless to be brought up as slaves.

From the roof of the priest's quarters we had a beautiful view down the narrow Bitlis Su valley, across the poplar bordered fields that furnished bread for the monastery. To the right a hot mineral spring had formed a large bald knoll of calcium salts, white as the snow-clad hills that rise steeply on either side of the valley. Some five miles down the view is cut off sharply by a rocky mountain, its broken outline resembling the spires of a Gothic cathedral.

It is a beautiful valley indeed, but the memories that haunt it are most ghastly. The quaint old monastery, hidden in its quiet nook, is a reminder of the worst passions of man, for the very children within its oft-beleaguered walls are doomed to lives embittered by their wrongs and overshadowed by feelings of race hatred and a consciousness of irresistible oppression. The faces we saw were cheerful enough but seamed with sadness, and it was with heavy hearts that we passed out through the arched gateway and waved adieu to the groups on the roof that blessed us with thin childish voices.

In Bitlis we learned that the roads along the shores of Lake Van were quite impassable on account of the deep snow, and that communication with Van city by road was therefore cut off. Our Tel Kaifi muleteers, after the manner of their race, demanded the whole sum for which they had contracted to carry us to Van. This they really seemed to consider their due, for it was no fault of theirs that the roads were blocked. We became quite exasperated by their demands, for their wretched animals had caused all sorts of delay and several times we had walked much of the day because our riding animals could not carry us. Finally we paid them in proportion to the distance traversed, and then had to eject them into the street *vi et armis*.

We were able to communicate with Van by telegraph and soon received a message from Dr. Raynolds, the head of the American mission in that city, saying that a motor boat had been sent to the Bitlis end of the lake for us.

There was no difficulty in securing horses for the twelve miles to the lake-shore, and we set out up the valley of the northern stream, bidding adieu to our missionary host at the bridge that marks the edge of the lava-built city. We had not gone far when we began to get into snow, in which our horses floundered dangerously. But it was nothing to what we encountered when we entered the broad, lava-filled valley beyond. It was filled with drifted snow six to eight feet deep into which

our horses sank to the girth at every step. Fortunately the packs had gone ahead in the chill of the dawn when all was frozen hard, so we had only our riding horses to look after. Dismounting we found that in places the crust would bear our weight, and then for some distance we would sink to the knees. Whenever this happened the horses would flounder helplessly and we would have to drag them out to firmer snow. First our coats came off, then our gloves and sweaters, and then we rolled up our sleeves, unfastened our collars, and struggled on, hauling away on the poor horses, with the perspiration running in streams down our backs. Such a scene I have never elsewhere been a part of. The broad, bleak valley, bordered by black lava cliffs topped by rocky peaks, formed a great theatre, blazing in reflected sunlight, through the midst of which struggled the floundering horses and the men, dressed rather for tropical travel than for the arctic surroundings in which they appeared. It was hard work too, the uncertain footing rendering a great deal of energy necessary. Our muscles soon began to get stiffened and knotted, but we struggled on, and after five hours of such work succeeded in reaching bare ground, on the summit of a ridge overlooking Lake Van.

The only feature of that bleak valley was the volcanic craterlet of Kerkur Dagh that juts out its jagged rim from the mountain mass on the north side. It is a part of the great Nimrud Dagh

from which came the huge flow of lava that filled the valley, sealing up the outlet of Lake Van and flowing far down the present bed of the Bitlis Su.

Nimrud is the third largest volcanic crater in the world, a great circular bowl, five miles in diameter. Its walls rise to a height just short of ten thousand feet above the sea, almost from the shores of the lake, which itself reaches the remarkable level of 5200 feet. The floor of the crater is 2200 feet lower than its rim and is partly filled by a lake, partly occupied by fissured and corrugated lava, in the mazes of which are hot springs, a very mild form of volcanic activity compared with the titanic upheavals of lava that were disgorged from this great wound some ten, possibly fifty, thousand years ago. So vast is this mountain that it is difficult to appreciate its colossal proportions. It must be crossed and recrossed to be understood. A photograph of it looks like a long flat ridge, for there is no commanding peak near it from which it can be looked down upon. As we rode up the valley beside it, Kerkur Dagh was conspicuous enough with its jet black rim of basalt, but the parent mountain was just a huge wall of white, curving so slightly as to appear perfectly straight.

Some day we may hope to have an observatory on Nimrud like those on Vesuvius, Mt. Pelée, and some of our American peaks, where specially equipped scientists may observe the phenomena of past and present activity, which will bear long and careful study. At present the mountain

serves no purpose, although in an accessible place the hot springs would doubtless be much visited. They were turned to some use a short time ago when they furnished a place of concealment to a party of refugee Armenian revolutionists. During the summer the irregularities of the lava offered sufficient hiding-places, but an Armenian winter sees the thermometer far below zero for some time. So these desperate fellows built their beds in the hot springs, sleeping with their bodies under water and their heads out. Thus they were able to save their meagre supply of wood for purposes of cooking.

The lava flow from Nimrud left a ridge across the upper end of the valley which was the outlet of Lake Van, where now is an inlet forming the harbour of Tadvan, a little Armenian village to which we rode on our weary horses just after the sun had sunk over the blue waters of the lake. Here we found our packs safely arrived and the motor-boat waiting on the shore.

We lost no time in embarking on our tiny craft. The pilot showed little inclination to make an immediate start, saying he was afraid of Kurdish robbers. But somehow he got over that dread and we found ourselves pounding away out into the lake in the brilliant light of the full moon, that lit up the waters and the snow-clad shores almost with the light of day, clothing them nevertheless with the silver mystery of moonlight. As we left the little bay of Tadvan we could plainly see on our

right the extraordinary crater of Sheikh Ora. Some tremendous explosion has carried away the whole side toward the lake so that its waters lave the inner walls of the old crater. As we passed, the moonlight entering the gaping mouth was searching the inmost recesses, throwing the seams of lava into deep shadow and lending to the splashing waters the sheen of pearls.

To our left was the great flat rim of Nimrud flanked by chains of ghostly ridges that bordered either curving shore. The southern we could see little of for we were plugging along near the bank, but the northern culminated far away across the lake in the stately pointed cone of Sipan, the highest of Van's volcanoes, that rises to a height but little short of 14,000 feet.

The lake of Van is about the same size as Lake Geneva, but far higher than the highest Swiss or Italian lakes, and more beautiful than the most celebrated of those mountain playgrounds. Unlike the clear, sweet waters of its European rivals it is highly charged with mineral matter in solution which renders it as salt as the Dead Sea or Great Salt Lake. The salts, however, are quite different from either of those lifeless bodies and are by no means deadly, so that Van swarms with fish, a sort of bleak, that are caught in great numbers when they ascend the streams to spawn, salted, and shipped all over Turkey, exactly as they were in the days of the Kalifate; water snakes and shell-fish are also to be found and a great

variety of lower life. One of the principal salts is borax, which gives the water a slippery feeling, makes it lather readily, and serves as an excellent specific in certain skin diseases. Swimming is delightful and absolutely safe, but the water is rather unpleasant to the taste and is said in some cases to bleach the hair to a brilliant golden hue.

The shores are clad with orchards, vineyards, gardens, and wheat-fields, that produce the very finest possible fruit and grain, on account of the brilliant mountain sun, the rich volcanic soil, and the lofty mountain screen, that protects from the weather and furnishes a constant supply of fresh water from the melting snows. The apples of the volcanic orchards near Nimrud were famous in the days of Harun-al-Rashid and the wheat grown on the same soil is almost unrivalled anywhere in the world. The grain is of great size and very soft, a quality that would not appeal to Western millers, but is very desirable where methods are primitive. Its most excellent quality is that it will swell up and burst after a few minutes' boiling, to the size and consistency of hominy. Here is a "breakfast food" ready prepared, of far better flavour than any of our much advertised products that go by that name.

Altogether Lake Van might become one of the most desirable health resorts in the world. Its mountain scenery is unrivalled and unique in character, its waters possessed of healing qualities, while rich mineral springs exist for the inner

man; its products are healthful, its climate leaves nothing to be desired: but unfortunately man is vile. The jealousy of the Turk for his control over the subject races of his empire makes progress impossible. The Kurd, who it must be admitted is more sinned against than sinning, has his worst qualities brought to the fore, while the Armenian dares not trust either them or his own kindred, but buries his talent in the earth and forgets whatever confidence he ever had in his fellow-men.

All this did not greatly bother us however when we rose next morning to find ourselves approaching the low shore of Avantz, the port of Van. Here we were received by an Armenian, the teacher in charge of the school established by the American mission. He addressed us in very good English, presented a note from one of the missionaries offering us the hospitality that a wanderer never fails to find among his own kindred in distant lands, and helped us to find means of transport for our baggage.

No conveyance but an old farmer's cart was to be found in the little group of houses by the waterside, so we set out to walk to the city. The snow had disappeared in the flat plain that we entered, but the heights that ringed it like an amphitheatre were white enough. Some three miles we walked to the walled city and there our guide secured a carriage, a perfectly commonplace hack, in which we drove for three miles more between rows of alternating houses and gardens, by a road lined

with tall buildings, poplars, and stubby willows, to the American mission. There we found ourselves in a large colony of our own people by whom we were most cordially received.

The group of mission buildings we found much larger than we had anticipated in so remote a region. Centring around the simple but well-built church are a boys' school, a well-equipped hospital, a girls' school, and four or five other buildings occupied by the missionaries and their families. All are surrounded by a strong mud wall with gates on two sides, and near one of them a dispensary open at all times, in charge of a native druggist. The buildings are all built in the native manner of sun-dried mud, moulded like adobe, finished with poplar boards, with which the window sashes and doors are made. The roofs are of willow poles and mud.

The mission work was begun here by Dr. George C. Raynolds in 1870. He had served as a surgeon in the navy during the Civil War, and had come out to Turkey with his wife soon after its close. Although well over seventy both of these lovely people are still vigorous. Mrs. Raynolds goes swimming in the lake while the snow is still on the shores and the old doctor used to ride around the hills with us on a mettlesome black horse that he handled like a trooper.

On such trips he used to regale us with stories of the war and of adventures with the Kurds. One of these is well worth repeating because of the

light it throws on the Kurdish character. While returning from a conference at one of the western stations of their mission, he and the late Mr. Knapp of Bitlis were delayed and compelled to stop for the night at a distance from the usual place, in the village of a notorious robber, Musa Bey. As usual the room in which they put up was soon filled with curious Kurds squatting around the wall. It is not customary to take any notice of such visitors unless they are persons of consequence, who do not come unannounced.

Imagine Dr. Raynolds's surprise when a servant whispered in his ear that among those in a dark corner was Musa Bey himself. The news boded no good, but the doctor did what he could by sending the chief a cup of tea. But it was too late, the quick Kurdish temper had been roused by what the man considered a slight, and he refused the cup and left in a huff.

The next day the two missionaries were walking down a steep place, Dr. Raynolds in advance, leading his horse. Two men were coming up the trail, singing, and apparently in good humour, though one was waving a sword. Dr. Raynolds took no special notice of him until they came face to face, when the man cut him over the head. Being a high-spirited and powerful man he resisted, and this so enraged the Kurd that he redoubled his blows and fairly cut his opponent down. Mr. Knapp was quickly overpowered and bound.

The men, one of whom now proved to be

Musa Bey, then decided to truss and blindfold their victims and leave them among the rocks near the trail. Dr. Raynolds then offered to tie the handkerchief over his eyes, and managed in doing so to stanch the blood from his worst wound, which was on the back of his head. Then the two men, bound together, were thrown into a hollow among some boulders and left to whatever fate might bring.

But the good doctor was far from dead yet, and managed to disengage his hands from his bonds and unfasten his comrade, who thought the Kurds had returned and began to pray for his life. The doctor managed to reassure him and they got back to the path, finding that their baggage had been passed by untouched. They walked some distance to a village, where they met their men in some to-do over the discovery of Doctor Raynolds's horse, which they recognized in possession of a caravan that had picked him up. The saddlebags were found intact and the pocket surgical kit, which was very necessary at this juncture, was safe and sound.

An old woman produced a fragment of mirror with the assistance of which the doctor set about to stitch up his own wounds. These were very serious, including several cuts on the head, face, and arms, one of which had left the tip of his nose hanging by a thread. All these he succeeded in sewing up except the one he had stanched with the blindfold, and that, being out of his reach, he had to leave to Mr. Knapp. That gentleman's hands

shook so badly that he did the work but ill. However all healed safely and the two were able to go on after a few days.

We had already noticed the nick in the Doctor's nose, and when he finished the story he took off his hat and pointed out the scar on the back of his head. The case was of course taken up by our government and ten thousand dollars damages was collected from the Turkish government. To "save its face" the Hukumet arranged that this and other damages be added to the price of a man-of-war then building in an American dockyard; for the Turk has no idea of a debt of honour, and dreads to have it known that any power can exact from it what might be looked upon as tribute.

Dr. Raynolds no longer keeps up regular medical practice but gives most of his time to teaching and preaching, in recognition of which he has just received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Williams College, his alma mater. His older work has been left to our host Dr. Ussher, who has built and maintained the hospital, and spends some time in work in the surrounding villages, Moslem and Christian alike. He too has had adventures in plenty.

He was once riding down a mountain valley when a party of Kurds ambushed his caravan, and proceeded to rifle the packs while one of their number covered Dr. Ussher with a rifle. They paid little attention to the surgical nurse, a little Armenian who had been brought up by Dr.

Raynolds and was devoted to his benefactors. He slipped under cover of a rock and drawing a flask from his pocket pointed the unstoppered mouth at the robbers, ordering them to desist. The Kurd with the rifle dived behind a rock as is the custom of these mountaineers when fighting. But Dr. Ussher was too quick for him and stood over him with a riding whip, threatening to give him a good lashing if he did not clear out. Seeing the rest of the party had done so the man took to his heels, and left the American physician missionary to congratulate his Armenian nurse.

Dr. Ussher now has the capable assistance of an English lady nurse, but his practice has grown so large that he is sorely in need of a capable surgeon to take that part of the work off his shoulders. There are also in the mission station another family who were on leave at the time of our visit, and several ladies whose work is in the girls' school and the kindergarten.

So isolated is Van that these missionaries often have no little difficulty in getting about, especially in cases where travel in winter is necessary. Serious illness in the little station at Bitlis has occasionally made it necessary for one of the doctors to make the journey thither through the snow, for the motor-boat is quite a recent addition to the local means of travel.

Occasionally it is possible to make a journey in a sledge drawn by horses over a narrow path packed by foot-passengers or the bullock sledges of peas-

ants in search of firewood. Dr. Ussher was once escorting some of the ladies on such a trip. The sledge several times slipped off the beaten track into deep soft snow, whence everything had to be lifted out again. The day was well advanced and the doctor feared he would not reach shelter before dark, so the horses were kept at a good pace. A steep hill offered a good opportunity for a burst of speed, and they fairly flew down. But right in the path appeared a peasant with a bullock sled. If the horses ran into it, everything would be tangled up in deep snow and another hour wasted; the sledge had no brake and the peasant was too stupid to get out of the way. But Dr. Ussher was equal to the occasion. He dashed in front of the horses, seized the little bullock by the horns, and tipped him over into the loose snow just in time to let the horses pass. Winter travel in Armenia requires strength, quickness, and resource.

The easiest communication between Van and Europe is by means of a road, practicable for carriages, which leads to the Russian frontier at Igdir, whence the Transcaucasian Railway is available to Tiflis and European Russia. The chief impediment on this route is Russian red tape and bureaucracy. The governor of Igdir a short time ago was a noted martinet who set up as an Asiatic potentate. As no one was allowed to sit in his presence there was but one chair in his reception room; and he was so oppressive toward

the Armenians that he was finally shot dead in the open street.

Dr. Ussher once arrived in Igdir with a party of ladies en route to America. The ladies got through the customs safely, but the doctor's baggage was held and he was refused admittance under a charge of being an Armenian with a false passport.

He passed the gendarmes at the custom-house, and took a carriage, ordering the driver to take him straight to the governor. On the way he was stopped by a Cossack who placed him under arrest. But the doctor refused to leave the carriage and said the Cossack could come along to the governor's if he pleased. Seeing no way out of it the man got in and they drove on.

As they approached the quarter-guard, the officer, seeing the carriage approaching at a mad gallop, supposed its occupant to be an official of some rank on account of the Cossack, whom he took for an orderly. Frantically he called out the guard to salute the supposed official, while the Cossack gestured to him, equally frantically, to desist. But the officer entirely misunderstood and hustled his men into line. Then the phaeton flashed by, the swords of the guard whirled through the air in the picturesque salute of the Asiatic cavalry regiments, and the quiet American, at that moment the Czar's prisoner, calmly touched his hat in acknowledgment.

Arrived at the gate he was ushered into the

room with the single chair, where several officers were gathered. There he met the governor, who examined his passport, and then turned to him with a brutal leer:

"You are an Armenian!"

Dr. Ussher said no word but reached out for the single chair, drew it to him, and calmly sat down with hands resting lightly in his pockets, and eyes fixed sternly on the governor's face. The company gasped and the governor's jaw dropped. The coup was a bold one but it worked.

"You are an American," said the martinet, in a much altered tone, and immediately changed his manner, treating Dr. Ussher with courtesy and consideration.

In the course of his work in Van, Dr. Ussher has made some very valuable contributions to medical science. He has successfully combated several epidemics of cholera and has lately received the formal thanks of the Porte for his services during an epidemic of typhus among the troops. Twenty-five hundred men actually died of this loathsome disease, and the hospitals were full to overflowing for weeks. It was an excellent opportunity to study the hitherto little known means by which the disease is propagated and as a result of his experiments the doctor has announced that he has proved conclusively that it is carried by lice, which swarm in the barracks occupied by the troops.

As in Mosul there is a Turkish military surgeon who tries to rival the foreigner. Dr. Ussher has

found bladder stones a very prevalent disorder among the natives, in and out of the city. The Turk had never heard of such a thing and asked to see the operation by which they were removed. He said he would like to perform it himself and was sure he could if he had an opportunity to witness it first. Dr. Ussher of course asked him to be present. But up to the time of our visit he had not taken advantage of the opportunity. Nevertheless he has a sign before his house announcing in both Turkish and Armenian that he is prepared to remove bladder stones free of charge.

CHAPTER XII

"VAN AND THE ARMENIANS"

THE city of Van is situated in a lacustrine plain, shaped like an amphitheatre, some five miles deep. The centre of the city is a long, narrow rock that rises to a sheer height of three hundred feet, not far from the flat lake-shore. It is crowned today by an imposing battlemented castle, of Turkish and Armenian construction, which occupies the whole summit and presents a long serrated skyline to the walled city which lies beneath. In this are the bazaars, the government buildings, and the chief mosques, with a jumble of houses. In places the walls have disappeared but elsewhere they still stand with the partly filled moat before them, ruinous and mediæval looking. A number of simple gates still arch the streets but they are disappointing and scarcely worthy of notice. The bazaars are not elaborate like those of Arab and Turkish cities but mostly of wood and rather tawdry. They are almost entirely in the hands of the Armenians, of course, and these people care too much for their profits to spend them on their shops.

The jewellers' bazaar alone is of any great interest, and that is on account of its silverware. The art of laying designs upon silver with antimony was doubtless once very widely practised, but today it is confined to a very few centres, of which Van is one. Specimens of excellent work of this sort are to be found, locally called Van ware. It is commonly made up in the shape of bowls, tumblers, napkin rings, brooches, cuff-buttons, and other decorative or useful articles. Van silversmiths turn their attention to other ware as well but unfortunately all their work is in the style of the Near East, unfinished according to Western standards.

Armenia was once noted for its textiles, embroidery, and lacework, but these industries have almost died out and those products have been replaced in the bazaars by Russian and German goods. But embroidered aprons and scarves are still to be had by buying from destitute families. They are but sad reminders of the day when Armenian silks and woollen goods were known all over the Near East and Europe, famous for their beautiful red dyes made from the kirmiz insect. As the name of Mosul is still preserved in muslin, so is that of the Armenian dyestuffs in cramoisie silks, and the more familiar words crimson and carmine. I am glad to be able to add however that Armenian lace-making has been revived at the American mission, under the supervision of Mrs. Ussher, with such success that Van laces are now

The Varag Mountain and the Village above Van

to be had in some of the best-known American white goods houses. The work was taken up as relief to destitute families and has proved most successful.

Although the Armenians own the bazaars the other quarters of the walled city are almost entirely occupied by Moslems. The residences of the shopkeepers are in the "gardens" which stretch out for three miles, more or less, to the east and south. They lend a charm to the city which is quite unattainable in such rainless regions as those occupied by Bagdad and Mosul. The roads that radiate outward from the castle rock are rendered picturesque by the carefully nursed poplars and willows. The houses, now scattered, now close together, though built of mud, are often decorated with painted balconies and doorways. Garden walls of mud are on either side, over which, or through which, occasional glimpses are to be had of budding fruit trees, or neat rows of closely clipped vines. On either side of the way are conduits, sometimes open, sometimes covered, where run streams of clear cold water, straight from the snows of Varag Mountain that raises its rocky pointed ridge behind the city.

The people on these roads are mostly Armenians in *à la Franga* clothes, for the great majority of the population are of that race. But often a Kurd or a peasant is to be seen in the picturesque Hakkiari costume. Turkish officials in green and blue uniforms flash by in wildly driven carriages,

and then by way of contrast comes a slow train of bullock carts of primitive workmanship, with solid wooden wheels like big cheeses. The ass furnishes the usual means of transporting garden produce and so one often meets him going to or from the bazaar, often ridden by a young rascal, for nowhere in the East are boys and donkeys disassociated.

The American mission is at the very edge of the gardens, and near it are the French, Russian, and English consulates. We were frequently guests at the latter, whose occupant, Captain Seel, we became very intimate with. As he is only a vice-consul he is outranked by his continental colleagues, a fact that would not appear to be greatly to England's advantage in the unsettled state of affairs in this region. But the fact that he is appointed from the army, instead of from civil life, and that his predecessors for some time back have been military men, shows that his government is keeping an eye on strategic developments in Armenia.

We also came to know M. Ulferieff, the representative of the Czar. He has been kept steadily at work to win over the favour of the Armenians, having a large sum of money to draw on for that purpose. We heard of his making contributions in the guise of "charity" to influential churches and monasteries, and even to revolutionary societies on various pretexts. He kept a constant watch on his colleagues and immediately reported any move of theirs that might be interpreted as an

The Castle of Van

attempt to push the interest of their governments. Especially was he careful to prevent any friendliness toward the Nestorians in the mountains to the south, whom the Czar's emissaries have made the greatest effort to bring into the fold of the Russian church through their Patriarch. This they almost certainly will not be able to accomplish, thanks partly to the influence of the Archbishop of Canterbury's mission. This suspicious attitude was a cause of endless bother to Captain Seel a short time ago when he made a short excursion toward the south. His little shooting trip was made the subject of conversations between St. Petersburg and London, and required a long and careful explanation through the embassy at Constantinople.

Turkish power in Van is represented by an army corps. This is composed almost entirely of infantry levies from the surrounding regions. They are a poor lot of men in ragged green uniforms, frequently deformed, badly fed and dirty. The officers are mostly Turks who are unhappy at being sent off to this remote province where there is no gaiety and little chance for graft. We called on the Commander Pasha and found him a most unsoldierly old chap, taciturn but courteous enough. His house, situated a half-mile from the walled city, was typical of the dwellings of the better class of Turkish official. The lower floor was unfurnished and unswept, used only by the servants. A staircase led up through a chill,

cheerless hallway to an upper floor. A heavy curtain was pulled aside from a doorway and we entered the reception room. The only articles of furniture were some long benches and a couple of chairs pushed back against the wall, with a small table and a few stands, with round tops six inches in diameter, used to support coffee cups and cigarettes, for each caller. On the plastered wall was a tawdry lithograph of the Sultan and a text printed on cloth.

The commandant came in when we had inspected the apartment and asked the usual questions about our home, religion, and the details of our journey. He had little to say to us in return but we gathered that he disapproved in general of the Hamidian policies and desired to protect the Armenians.

The civil power is in the hands of the Vali, who owed his position to Kiamil's cabinet and was recalled soon after our arrival. When we called on him in his office at the serai we found him a short, stout man with a great black beard. He spoke French slowly but well, and we found him quite willing to talk. He was a Kurd and asked particularly about our route below Mosul. He was interested to learn that we had come by Kerkuk because he was a native of that region, and had a brother who was Mudir of Tauk, which had been one of our stopping places. It is unusual to find a Kurd occupying a high position in Turkey, although it has frequently happened in history.

This one professed a great desire for reform, especially in municipal affairs, and the improvement of means of transportation.

Our visit, corresponding so nearly with his recall, did not fail to command notice. Our familiarity with the foreigners and our frequent calls on the prominent officials also attracted attention. The result was that it was reported to us that we had become a subject of bazaar rumour. Men said we had arrived from Constantinople with a caravan load of reform, which we were about to spread broadcast over the city, after we had first carefully familiarized ourselves with it. Such rumours are quite common in these cities where promises are being constantly made and never kept. The Turk labours under the delusion that he can clean out the filth of his Augean stables with phrases. These assume astounding proportions when they have been bandied about the bazaars. But the Turk does nothing and only rumours remain.

One result of our call on the Commander Pasha was a permit to visit the castle. Together with Dr. Ussher and several ladies from the mission we made our way to the precipitous east end of the rock where we were joined by Captain Seel and his *kavass*, who lent both authority and dignity to our party. Going on to the north side, opposite the city, we made our way up a steep zigzag road to an imposing mediæval gateway. Here we were challenged by a sentry and presented the com-

mandant's permit. But the officer was below in the plain and a soldier had to be sent to him with the writing for his verdict. For some time we waited, watching the little body of infantry marching back and forth below us, like troops of ants, or examining the carved stone torso and head of a man that was discovered a short time ago half-buried in the ruins. It undoubtedly dates from Assyrian times and is of no little interest, but it had been frequently examined by former travellers to little purpose and did not suffice to fill the time occupied by that soldier in finding his officer.

But he finally returned and we were given full permission to enter. No restrictions were placed on our movements and we were allowed to wander at will, under the skilled guidance of Dr. Ussher and Captain Seel.

The eastern and western ends of the rock are covered with picturesque but ruinous battlemented walls dating from comparatively recent times but containing stones on which cuneiform inscriptions in the ancient Urartian language are to be easily seen. These ends are now quite deserted but the fortifications in the central section are now filled with modern mud buildings used as storehouses, and as quarters for the small garrison. Among the ruinous walls of other buildings are numbers of old bronze and iron guns of strange and remarkable workmanship, dating from all the periods of Turkish ordnance manufacture. One

The Entrance to the Castle of Van

very old piece of enormous size is inscribed in Arabic and could doubtless tell fascinating tales of the wars between the Arab and the Turk.

The highest point of the great rock is occupied by a platform, amid a jumble of modern storehouses, where are ranged a lot of old muzzle-loading cannon of fifty years ago, mounted on fairly effective wooden carriages. In an open shed in front of them are some breech loaders, mostly of small calibre, that might have been up to date a quarter of a century later. But of modern guns there is not one in Van castle. Nor is there an artilleryman in the city, although there are extensive "artillery barracks." As a result when the Sultan's accession day arrived—it was the day before our visit to the castle—there was not a man to be found who could fire a salute, and so the day passed without the noise of guns, contrary to all Turkish tradition.

Passing around on the side toward the city we found some large rock-hewn chambers, the work of Urartian artisans who have left inscriptions beside them. Some of these are twenty or thirty feet square and there are said to be six or eight, though the position of some is concealed by the Turks, who alternately deny their existence and explain that they are uninteresting and filled with military stores.

This city side of the rock is absolutely precipitous and looks straight down upon the walled city with its flat roofs and domes. During the

massacre of 1907 a number of people caught in the bazaars were driven over the dizzy brink into a small group of gardens below. But this idea was not original with the Turks. The Mongols did the same during their ghastly sack in 1398, counting their victims by thousands, instead of the tens of the Turkish massacre. The result is that the foot of the rock has a bad name and none will build near it. So it is occupied by gardens and a little grove of poplars, which has become a favourite picnic place.

Skirting the city side we came back to the west end of the rock near the gate by which we had gained admission. Here we found more rock-hewn chambers with inscriptions on the face of the cliff beside their low, square entrances. These chambers are smaller than the more easterly ones, and only about six feet high. The larger has four large niches in the farther wall resembling couches, but what they were used for it is impossible to say. They may have been occupied by some primitive population, they may have been guard-rooms or stores. The inscriptions unfortunately give us no definite information on that subject.

We descended by the extreme western end of the great rock and found there the foundation of what was doubtless an ancient gateway. It is built of enormous monolithic blocks laid without mortar, many of them inscribed with cuneiform letters. One block, which Dr. Ussher and I measured with some difficulty, was twenty-four feet long, four

feet wide, and nearly three feet high. So large are these stones that not a few have been broken by their own weight on account of the gradual settling of the wall through the twenty-five or thirty centuries that have elapsed since the time the inscriptions tell us it was built. It is only from four to fifteen feet high and may be traced not more than sixty feet along the front, but it is nevertheless a very striking memorial of a long past age.

Besides the inscriptions on the castle rock there are many on prominent outcrops in the plain and on the hills that border it, especially Topra Kala, the chief high-place, the temple of ancient times. The most important of all is a huge trilingual on the precipitous face of the castle rock, above the city. So large are the characters that they can be made out from the streets with the naked eye and clearly seen with an opera-glass. It is signed by the great Xerxes, who returns thanks in three languages to his god Ahuramazda, the Persian sun-god, for granting him the victory over this country.

It was by means of this inscription that the Urartian, or as it has also been termed, the Vannic, language has been deciphered and the numerous inscriptions translated.

From them we learn that Van, or as they called it Dhuspas, was the capital in the ninth century B.C. of Ishpuinis and his son Menuas, who spread the arms of Urartu over all of what we know as

Armenia, fortifying the mountain passes against Assyria, and even taking possession of some of the plains beyond. This empire was held by Menuas's son Argistis until his death in 760 B.C.

It was a period of decadence in Assyria, but in 745 Tiglath Pileser II. came to the throne and began to take the offensive. By 735 he had reached the shores of the lake and besieged the Urartian King Sharduris II. in his castle of Dhuspas. But take it he could not, for the art of assaulting fortified places was young in those days, and the rock of Dhuspas was impregnable.

In the sixth century we find the kingdom of Van once more a power to be reckoned with. Its King was Tigranes I., who was a friend and ally of Cyrus the Persian and said to have been the brother-in-law of Astyages the Mede, whom Cyrus overthrew in 549. Tigranes was followed by a strong line of kings until the conquest of Van by Xerxes, of which we have no record except the great inscription on the castle rock.

The Romans under Pompey besieged and took Van in 67 B.C. and slew its King Tigranes for sheltering the great Mithridates, the last King of the neighbouring kingdom of Pontus, one of the worst enemies of Rome. But Rome could not hold the Armenian mountains and the ancient kings of Urartu were succeeded by a series of pagan and Christian monarchs, the last of whom finally fell before the Turks in 1365.

The affinities of the ancient Urartians are

difficult to establish. Although they used the Semitic cuneiform character their language was anything but Semitic, nor was it Turanian. It is probable that they belonged to the Mediterranean race and were related to the people of the Ægean civilization who built Mycenæ, and whose remains have been found in many parts of the Mediterranean basin. Their stonework, and the few examples of pottery and metal work that remain to us, bear out this theory. Like the Philistines and some of the contemporary races in Syria, they were probably driven from their homes by an Aryan invasion from Europe, the great Hellenic invasion that Aryanized Greece, Ionia, and Crete.

The Aryanization of Armenia was due to a similar movement on the part of the northern branch of the peoples who entered Greece, the Thraco-Phrygians. They moved eastward along the southern shore of the Black Sea, founding a powerful kingdom in Phrygia and completely dominating Armenia after the Persian conquest. But they never succeeded in getting farther eastward, because the country there was in the hands of the Indo-Iranian Medes. Neither the one race nor the other has ever succeeded in effectively crossing the Gate of Asia.

There was doubtless much admixture of Parthian Turanian blood among the inhabitants of Armenia for the countries all around were conquered by that people and Tigranes the King cemented his treaty with Mithridates by marrying

the daughter of that Parthian King. The further introduction of Semitic blood which I have elsewhere mentioned has made the Armenians the most mixed of all races, and it is most certainly to this quality that they owe their lack of cohesion.

Systematic oppression by the Turks has greatly increased this defect. All over Armenia Moslem colonies have been planted in villages from which the Christian inhabitants have been ousted, until today there is no province in which the Armenians can claim a majority. Even about Lake Van, the very heart of their ancient home, they are outnumbered everywhere except in the city itself. Way is made for Moslem colonists either by massacre or by various forms of official oppression. The simplest form is by selling out the property to pay excessive taxes. Armenians are assessed five times, it is estimated, as high as the Kurds. The latter are permitted to pay in produce, but the Christians are required to pay cash, which is so scarce in the country districts that the demand is ridiculous. When the people cannot pay, their village is condemned and their houses and fields sold to the Kurds, who pay in produce or secure cash from Abdul-Hamid's notorious Agricultural Bank, on mortgage.

This institution is one of the most despicable means of oppression imaginable. Not only does it advance money to Kurds on lands they take from Armenians, but to the Armenians also, on short mortgages at high rates of interest. Officials see

to it that the victims are not able to pay off their obligations, the mortgage is foreclosed, and the Christians are left homeless.

Whenever a village becomes prosperous by reason of some special industry or trade, government officials step in with some excuse and destroy the source of prosperity. For instance silk culture was revived after the massacres in 1907 in Chengiler near Brusa. The inhabitants became fairly prosperous and attracted the attention of the Young Turks in 1909. They sent word to the Vali, one of the prominent members of the party named Bekr Sami Bey, to look after this blight on his administration. The plan he adopted was to surround the village at the time when the silkworms were about to spin their cocoons and needed most food, on the plea of attempting to arrest some robbers whom he accused the villagers of harbouring. No one was permitted to leave the houses under any circumstances, so no mulberry leaves could be collected and the silkworms all died. Then a rigorous house to house search was instituted and the *zaptiehs* took whatever they chose. At one stroke the silk industry of the village was ruined, and the inhabitants robbed of all goods that might have been turned into ready cash to refurnish the depleted stock.

Although the Moslem villagers are supplied with arms and ammunition of the most modern type, the Armenians are not permitted to have arms of any description, and their houses are searched at

regular intervals to prevent any being concealed. This leaves them utterly helpless in the face of an incursion by Kurds, who camp on the helpless villagers and literally eat them out of house and home. It paves the way for the worst outrage of all, the systematic violation of women.

Abdul-Hamid conceived the typically Turkish idea of preventing the appearance of another generation of Armenians by arranging that Armenian women should not bear Armenian children. He therefore instituted the custom, unheard of under pre-existing conditions, of abducting and violating women. Today that policy, though instituted under the old régime, is carried on by the Young Turks. The men of a village are hounded into the army by the officials, and Kurds are sent in to wreek their will on the defenceless wives and daughters. The horror of such a proceeding is almost inconceivable, but several instances came to our notice, and we were assured frequently by missionaries, consuls, and others in a position to know, that it was a regular system, not only in Armenia but in the country occupied by the Syrian Christians as well.

Needless to say this method has not accomplished its purpose, and means have been adopted to get rid of unwelcome Armenian babies. The most diabolical of these occurred under Young Turk rule in Zeitun, near Aintab. The people of this village are of sturdy peasant stock and have successfully held the Turks off for generations.

In 1895 five hundred of their number, armed with ramshackle old muskets, repelled a whole Turkish army corps, armed with modern weapons. For weeks they kept their attackers shivering in the snow, until the sluggish Powers, their eyes finally opened by the awful excesses of that frightful year, were compelled to intervene, and so saved for the moment the reputation of the Turkish army. No such methods worked in Zeitun, but a "Reform" administration found a way. They had heard of compulsory vaccination in English and French colonies. An order went out that all the people in the Aintab vilayet should be vaccinated. A party of troops and military surgeons was sent to Zeitun and vaccinated four hundred babies. Before morning every single one of them was dead. Nowhere else was the order enforced; it was promulgated for the murder of the Zeitunli babies, and once its object was attained it was forgotten. And this incident did not happen under Abdul-Hamid, but under Young Turk rule in 1913. Rumours of it reached Van at the time of our visit, but so callous have the people grown that the most awful tales of horror are mere daily experiences.

It is of course quite hopeless for foreigners to interfere. A short time ago it was reported that a village, in full view of the Americans' summer home at Artemid, quite near the city, was being plundered, the men killed and the women outraged. Dr. Ussher could see the blaze with his field-

glasses and was begged by friends in the city to aid the villagers. He mounted his horse and rode to the serai to see the Vali. That bland Turk, not knowing that the doctor had been at Artemid, said that the reports were false, there was no fire, only an attempt to throw dust in the eyes of his dear missionary friends, and slander his much persecuted but really noble administration. When he heard that his caller had seen the fire he said it was accidental. But Dr. Ussher was obdurate and the Vali tried to appeal to his pity. It was a group of wild Kurds, thousands of them, well armed and protected by outposts that ambushed the roads. His heart bled for the faithful Armenian peasants, but he could do nothing with his mutinous troops against such devils.

Finally Dr. Ussher, refusing to be browbeaten or hoodwinked, succeeded in obtaining a guard of *zaptiehs*, commanded by one of the chief officers of that corps in the city, a major, and set out for the village. He soon found that the object of the *zaptiehs* was to hinder, not to help. They insisted on camping in a village two miles or so from the scene of trouble, although the burning village was not more than an hour's brisk canter from the city. They said it was getting dark and they feared ambush by the Kurds, although Dr. Ussher well knew that those gentry were too intent on plunder and outrage to think of *zaptiehs*. When he tried to go on however he was compelled to remain, for the major could not think of allowing

a foreigner to risk his life, on account of the complications certain to ensue.

The next morning the party set out at a late hour. On the way they met Kurds driving off animals loaded with plunder. The bodies of one or two men, shot in the back, lay beside the road. They met a woman in a state bordering on collapse and frightfully bruised. Dr. Ussher questioned her and she answered intelligently despite the efforts of the voluble major, who sought to drown her words in affected sympathy. She was telling how her husband was murdered and her babe killed at her breast, when she stopped with a look of abject fear, at something going on behind her questioner's back. He turned quickly and saw one of the *zaptiehs* threatening the woman with a rifle, and motioning to her to keep silent. Having directed the woman to the mission he rode on to the village.

The sight that met his eyes was one of the most awful desolation. In the fields outside were bodies of men and women, trees were felled and crops destroyed. In the village itself most of the huts were burned and the streets were choked with bodies. He went right to work to help those that still breathed while the *zaptiehs* did all they could to conceal the extent of the horror, impeding him in his work, and throwing bodies into the houses that still burned. They made no attempt to hinder the Kurds who were still making off with loads of plunder.

At nightfall they returned to their last night's

camp, trying to take the doctor with them but he refused to go. There was but one house high enough to admit his horse, and in that he spent the night with a great gaping hole in the roof above his head. About midnight the place was brilliantly lighted up; the Kurds had returned and set fire to the adjoining hut. He sallied out but was offered no violence, the robbers having doubtless been warned by the *zaptiehs*.

He was able to do little but care for the wounded, among whom he spent several days despite the attempts of the Turks to get him away so that his charges would die. He is able to bear witness to the total destruction of that village, with the connivance, doubtless under the orders, of the Turks, and to the unspeakable horrors that were perpetrated in it.

The prearranged massacres of Abdul-Hamid's time beginning with the isolated Sasun massacre in 1894, and carried on until his deposition, and the equally dreadful massacres under the Young Turks in 1909, were the grand coups of the policy of extermination. In Van itself the Moslem population is so much in the minority that the city has often escaped the general massacres that have had well-known and terrible effects in such places as Adana, Erzerum, Bitlis, and Constantinople itself. But there have been special massacres organized for Van in which the bloodiest work is done by Kurds brought in from the hills, and by the Turkish troops.

In these times the American mission has been the chief place of refuge for the miserable people, its compound having sheltered hundreds. The missionaries too have been the foremost champions of the oppressed. After the massacre of 1905 had gone on for several days, when the mission was crowded with refugees and the food was giving out, Dr. Ussher decided to attempt to reach the Vali. His act met the disapproval of the others but he was determined to push the matter. Saddling his horse he rode down the long crooked road that leads through the gardens to the walled city. As he approached a quarter inhabited by Moslems, a man burning trash in the road looked at him in amazement, as if he could not believe his eyes. Then he bolted into the house and reappeared with a rifle which he levelled at the approaching horseman. Dr. Ussher, looking his man straight in the eye, rode right up to the muzzle. A crowd began to gather. The man with the rifle hesitated. If he killed a foreigner there might be trouble and it would be known who fired the shot. With a curse he turned and entered the house, partly on account of innate cowardice, partly out of the respect always found in Turkey for the life of an "European."

Dr. Ussher rode on to the gate of the serai through an excited crowd that stared at him in the utmost astonishment not unmixed with awe. He sent his name to the Vali and received word that he would be received. But as he mounted the

stairs to the office two *zaptiehs* levelled their rifles at his breast and told him to go back. At the same time he was seized from behind and shut up with a guard in a room on the lower floor. In an adjoining apartment a group of officers sat talking loudly. Every few minutes someone would enter and read a telegram, while reports were constantly brought in regarding the progress of the massacre. These and the discussions that followed were plainly heard by the American in the other room. The telegrams were mainly inquiries from Constantinople; a few were orders.

For hours Dr. Ussher was kept in that room, and still he heard the officers, but no word came from the Vali. Then there was a great stir in the adjoining room; another telegram was read. It was different from the others and contained an order for the cessation of the massacre. It was received with disapproval and curses by the officers, whom it required to go out and recall their troops, crazed with liquor and lust.

Almost immediately an officer entered Dr. Ussher's room and conducted him with great courtesy to the Vali. He was politely received, offered a chair, and the usual coffee and cigarettes. The patient Vali listened to his story with evident interest, assured him of his sympathy, of his benevolent love for the Armenians, and told of his gallant efforts to prevent further massacre. He said that he had been working day and night to succour his Christian subjects, and at last had been

able to quiet the populace. So Dr. Ussher rode back to the crowded compound with his message of peace, well knowing that the Vali was a liar, but satisfied that the blood-thirst of the Sultan was glutted for the moment.

The reason for this oppression is simply fear. The Hukumet is kind enough to those it can handle easily, for instance the Kurds. But the Armenians have refused to be treated like cattle, to be exploited for the benefit of their far less civilized masters. Moreover they have excited sympathy in Europe which has resulted in demands for reform, the very idea of which is heartily detested by the Turk, Old or Young. Through it he has lost province after province in Europe, and its appearance in Armenia would mean that the position of Turk and *rayat* would be reversed. The Armenian knows how to make money, the Turk only how to take it, and money means power in the venal Ottoman Empire. The Turk, seeing the time coming when he shall be prevented from extortionate exploitation of the Armenians, has decided that the Armenians must go. As a result, if his own statistics are to be believed, he has succeeded in reducing their number by one half, from 4,000,000 in the year of the Berlin Congress, 1878, to 1,900,000 in 1913.

This wholesale massacre and oppression has naturally led to the formation of extreme revolutionary organizations known as Fedais, "those who sacrifice themselves." There are a large

number of societies grouped under this head which incline more and more to two large divisions, the Armeni whose policy is a sort of passive resistance, and the Tashnakists, "men of the banner," who seek to make an autonomous Armenia by resisting violence with violence, and even encouraging the Turk in his wild orgies, hoping that he will override himself and bring the Powers to the aid of the oppressed. They stop at nothing, having been known more than once to deliberately invite the massacre of their more peaceful fellow-countrymen, whose fate, it must be admitted, they do not hesitate to share. There is little doubt that they are responsible for the death of some of the Americans who perished in the Cilician massacres, whom they fired upon in the hope that their murder would cause immediate intervention.

Their favourite arms are Mauser pistols and dynamite bombs, instruments of destruction they have learned the use of in the Caucasus. They often are well-supplied with rifles, among which Russian military arms are predominant, supplied from the Caucasus, doubtless as a free contribution from the Russian government, which gives these rascals every assistance and looks upon their activity as the chief means of preparing the way for annexation of the coveted provinces of Turkish Armenia.

The Tashnakists are financed by the voluntary contributions of Armenians all over the world, by money raised in Europe and America for "schools

and orphanages," by Russian official "charity," and by forced loans from their more passive fellow-countrymen, especially rich merchants who, having much to lose, do not sympathize with an organization whose very name denotes sacrifice. This last method of extortion and blackmail is constantly employed in Van and several ghastly crimes have resulted from refusal of the often exorbitant demands.

During our stay in the city a prominent citizen was ordered to place a sum of money in a tree behind his house, just outside the garden wall. Instead he set three men to watch the tree. During the night a man approached the place, and the watchers incautiously rushed out to seize him. They were greeted by a hail of bullets from Tashnakists concealed in the street and their riddled bodies were picked up next morning. The man whom all believed to be the leader in this crime was pointed out to us a day or so later, strutting about the streets in a conspicuous blue riding suit, his fez on one side, and with an air of prosperity and of superiority to those about him on his coarse heavily mustachioed countenance.

The Tashnakist society does act at times as a vigilance committee, administering a primitive sort of justice. The method used is almost invariably assassination by bullet or bomb. The braggadocio which is a prominent characteristic of this largely Oriental people comes out conspicuously on such occasions and it is always well

known that the Tashnakists are the slayers. This *Vehmgericht* is not confined to Moslem enemies of the society however, although a prominent, if notorious, Kurd and a Vali of Van were both numbered among its victims. It is applied to Armenians also whose zeal is too slack, or who prove not to be pliable in the hands of the radicals. The worst instance of this was the murder of the good Bishop of Akhtamar, an historic island monastery in the lake a few miles from Van, who was a pacifist leader and dared to take literally his Master's command to turn the other cheek. The murder was dastardly in the extreme, but the victim was wrong as events have shown. His flock is the most wretched in the neighbourhood of the city, murders are frequent and they have been compelled to pasture the flocks of their Kurdish neighbours in their laboriously cultivated wheat-fields, until they have given up tilling the ground entirely. At the time of our visit we heard that several hundred sheep had been kept during the summer in some isolated mountain valleys and were wintering in the shelter of the monastery itself. They were the last hope of the forlorn villagers, who hoped to eke out another year through them. But later in the spring when the sheep were about to be sent to market in the city, a tribe of Kurds suddenly swooped down on them, killed two of the shepherds, and drove the sheep off to the hills.

The attempts of the revolutionaries to precipi-

tate a massacre have not always been successful. Abdul-Hamid had a way of picking his own time, and would not be dragooned into anything. In 1906 a party entered the city and attacked a police patrol, unquestionably trying to make trouble, for Turkish police do not attack armed men if they can help it. When they had killed a policeman the Tashnakists took refuge in the house of a prominent citizen and took care to advertise their presence. Troops soon dislodged them and burnt the house; but the trouble-breeders escaped through a maze of gardens, and scattered among the Armenian quarters. Here was a situation indeed! If the troops and gendarmes were turned loose in the city in search of the refugees there would be a massacre beyond question, if not the face of the Turks would be "blackened." For twenty-four hours the telegraph wires between Constantinople and Van were kept busy with official communications. But at the end of that time the troops were drawn off. The time was not ripe then, but full retribution was exacted in due time.

The massacre of 1908 was, however, precipitated by Tashnakist excesses, but not apparently in pursuance of any prearranged plan. One of the inner circle of the revolutionary chiefs came to the Vali in February, and offered to betray his fellow-leaders in the house where they were to meet that night, and to expose the hiding places of large numbers of rifles and a quantity of ammunition.

This man, David by name, had had a jealous quarrel with one of his colleagues and was, it is said, condemned to death by them.

Instead of taking immediate action the Vali decided to wait until the morrow and then go after the arms, fearing Turklike to exceed his instructions. Vain were the pleas of the quondam Tashnakist, who knew what his life would be worth if any of his former associates escaped. Search was begun next morning under his direction. House after house was entered without opposition, so suddenly had the blow fallen, and with unusual sobriety on the part of the Turks. Hollows were found in the sun-dried brick walls, which lend themselves readily to the making of such hiding places. All sorts of buildings were entered, and cache after cache was revealed, even in such places as churches and the houses of foreigners, where they had been made by servants. The day's work brought to light some five hundred rifles, a large supply of ammunition, and a hundred pounds of dynamite.

These were loaded on carts and started in convoy for the citadel. As they were nearing the British consulate they were halted by a furious fire from behind garden walls. Leaving their charge in the road the soldiers took cover and responded, while the British consul, and his fellow-subjects who had taken refuge with him, looked on from the upper windows. The fight was abruptly terminated by the detonation of the

dynamite in one of the carts, which created a stampede of the troops, but did no further harm than make a deep excavation in the roadway, which has not yet been entirely filled up. The Tashnakists escaped among the gardens, but still there was no massacre.

David, the traitor, was honoured and granted a large pension which it was well known he would not long enjoy, while orders came from the Sultan that a hundred lives should be exacted for his if he were killed. For six weeks he swaggered in the bazaars and streets and then was shot down by a mere boy, Tirlamazian by name. That act precipitated the massacre of 1908, for the orders were carried out, and the Armenians in the bazaar in the walled city were slain, until considerably more than a hundred innocent men had perished for the wild act of a madcap youth.

For some time a state of siege existed in the city, the Armenians remaining in their quarters, where the Turks did not dare attack them for fear of Tashnakist bombs. Finally assurances were received from Constantinople that no further massacring would be permitted; an armistice was declared and the Armenian quarters once more searched for arms and the revolutionary leaders. These were finally discovered in one of the underground channels, called *kerezes*, by which water is conducted into the city from the mountains. Two days in the dark tunnel with their feet in ice-cold water had not improved the courage of these

men who had sworn to perish rather than surrender. So it happened that when a lone soldier found them in their moist retreat and threatened to smoke them out like jackals, they all yielded to him and were sent up one after the other to the tender mercies of a Turkish prison. But once in prison in Turkey a man is fairly safe, for executions in due process of law are most rare. Tirlamazian himself never paid the penalty of his chauvinistic folly, but was released with the others a few months later to be welcomed as a national hero.

However much we may sympathize with the Armenians we can scarcely condone the barbarous methods of these extremists. Nevertheless it was by such methods as these that Greece, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Thrace have been liberated, and it is impossible to condemn those who follow such conspicuously successful examples. It is to be hoped that such acts will soon be unnecessary. The terrible maelstrom into which Europe has been plunged while I write may result in radical changes for Armenia. Jealousy between the Czar and the Kaiser has been responsible for many of the throes of that country. The one has encouraged disorder for the sake of his own interests, the other has discouraged intervention in the vain hope that Armenia might sometime fall into German hands. An autonomous Armenia is practically impossible on account of the fact that there is no territory in which the Armenian people form a majority of the inhabitants. That

Russia is a better master than Turkey there can be no doubt. Russia is gradually becoming enlightened, while the Turk seems only to plunge more deeply into barbarism. Let us hope, for the benefit of the Armenian people, that a definite readjustment of their affairs may be accomplished by the treaty that shall terminate the present European War.

Despite the terrible condition of the country there is much that is beautiful and picturesque in the environs of Van. In the southernmost bight of the lake is tragic Akhtamar, a rocky islet that has been the home of a body of monks since early Christian times. Its ancient church is one of the most impressive in Armenia. The high narrow naves that face the cardinal points, radiating from the cupolaed body of the building, the lofty massive construction, the narrow windows, and the compact Hellenic cruciform plan, lend it a stately dignity, an air of permanence that contrasts with our more slender Gothic churches. Its massive style is singularly appropriate to this mountain region; which makes it clear even to the most casual observer that though the inspiration came from Byzantium, the Vannic builders have incorporated in their work the spirit of their mountainous surroundings.

One of the most interesting features of the church are the sculptures in low relief on its walls, representing scenes from biblical legend and early Armenian ecclesiastical history. Adam and Eve

are shown in the garden with a delightful naïveté, that is an interesting commentary on the simple faith of this mountain people, a faith that was shared by the other Eastern churches, and was one of the chief causes of their dissension from the argumentative doctrinarian West. The old Armenian prelate was more interested in speculating as to what language was spoken in heaven, than in arguing the abstruse questions that the Western theologians were never tired of calling conferences to discuss. Like all Armenian iconography these Akhtamar sculptures are quite without any artistic quality, but their antiquarian interest is great.

Nearer Van, hidden away in the upper slopes of the picturesque mountain of the same name, is the monastery of Varag. It has been often violated and sacked, being in a poor position for defence. The seven churches it once boasted are all in ruins save two, one of which is the church used today by the monks and their orphan charges. When we visited the place the monastery was deserted, its occupants being at work among the fields and groves. But word of our coming was soon carried to the Bishop, who dropped the skirt of his cassock, left his plough, and welcomed us. With a key a foot long he opened the door of the church and admitted us into the narrow, but lofty, vaulted nave. When our eyes became used to the chill darkness we made out, painted upon the columns on either side, the almost obliterated and

An Ornamented Brick Doorway in an Old Turkish Mosque at Van

most cadaverous faces of Moses and King Tiridates, the first patron of Christianity in this region. The figures to which they belonged were above our heads and so slightly were they foreshortened that they seemed like manikins dangling from the roof. Passing between similarly decorated square columns we came to the sanctuary, where the altar, covered with soiled linen, stood beneath a higher, narrower vault than that of the nave. Part of it, concealed by a curtain, was undecorated and bare, but for a coat of badly chipped whitewash. It was the oldest part of the church, dating according to our guide from the sixth century. The other parts were built at various later periods, so that the building is a sort of patchwork. It is ill cared for too and still shows the effects of fires kindled in it by Moslem desecrators.

The other unruined church is now the library, and contains several old illuminated texts in Armenian, chiefly copies of the Scriptures and commentaries thereon, with one or two works on Armenian history. The latter are picturesque in the extreme, but are more valuable to the student of folk-lore than to one interested in facts. The illuminations are, like the sculptures of Akhtamar and the wall paintings, curiously primitive. They are entirely wanting in perspective, but faithful in the portrayal of all essential details, such as the blood of martyrs and the tortures of the damned.

The buildings occupied as living quarters have

all been recently built to replace those that were burned. We sat down with two of the priests in a room whose only ornament was a beautiful portrait of a former Bishop of Varag, who later became the Catholicos, the head of the Gregorian Armenian church. It was done by a well-known Russian artist, and shows the strong, handsome, bearded face of one of the strongest men the Armenian people have produced in recent years. We talked with his successor of his work, over our cups of Turkish coffee, and then departed for our ride back to the city.

A few miles to the east of Lake Van lies the smaller Lake Archag, its surface five hundred feet higher than its large neighbour. It is gloriously situated among lofty peaks and is one of the most picturesque of mountain lakes. It is famous for its waterfowl, ducks and geese, and it was chiefly in pursuit of these that we visited it, as the guests of Captain Seel and M. Ulferieff. Our camp was situated in the lee of a rocky ridge, behind which was a swamp, ever alive with coot, where the geese came in the morning and evening to feed. The country around was wild and desolate, but a few villages were to be seen from a neighbouring height. When we inquired into their nationality we learned that one was Turkoman, another Kurd, another Nestorian, and the last Armenian. The young Nestorians used to follow us on our shooting expeditions; the Armenian village I visited on foot, finding it squalid and ruinous, while their

Kurdish neighbours were prosperous indeed, having large flocks of sheep in the pastures that were then free of snow; of the Turkomans we saw but one or two, for they mix with neither Kurd nor Christian.

CHAPTER XIII

TO PERSIA THROUGH THE COUNTRY OF THE SHEKAK KURDS

THE roads from Van to the Persian frontier and on to Lake Urmi are never easy, and quite impassable in winter. We found it very difficult to leave before the beginning of May, but a caravan having arrived on the twenty-sixth of April, we succeeded in obtaining a muleteer to take us on our way two days later. He was a Mukri Kurd, Ali Chaush by name, who wore the full dress of his tribe, baggy blue trousers gathered in at the ankle, a short tunic of the same material, and a large turban, wound around a pointed cap, so that the fringes of the striped scarves that composed it hung down over the ears. He carried a carbine over his shoulder, and his sash, in which was thrust a large dagger, was almost concealed by a belt full of cartridges, eked out by a bandolier over each shoulder. He was a dandy indeed, in marked contrast to our sackcloth-clad *katarjis* of the previous stages. His mount was a well-built stocky mountain pony, while those he furnished us, though decidedly inferior, were

quite passable. Ali Chaush himself did not assist in the packing, nor have anything to do with the pack-horses, which were driven by two menials, Kurds of a picturesque enough appearance, but more like our earlier acquaintances. Their master rode with us and the *zaptiehs*, but was taciturn and never to be seen at meal-time or at night.

We were delighted to have the company of Captain Seel for the first half of our journey. We had decided to take the road that leads south-east over the Chukh Dagh pass to Bashkala, the most remote centre of Turkish government in the whole Empire. It is the seat of a Mutesarif, an official next in rank to a Vali and superior to a Kaimakam. That official was an acquaintance of Captain Seel's and it was partly to see the country and partly to see him that the Captain accompanied us. Two *zaptiehs* and the consular *kavass* completed our party, the latter adding no little to our "face," because of his neat uniform, his curved scimitar, and the lion and unicorn that adorned his fez. He bore the consul's handsome English sporting rifle also, wearing the long pencil-like cartridges in his belt, to the envy of every Kurd we met.

Dr. Ussher sped us on our way according to the custom of the country, which the missionaries have almost universally adopted. When we had bidden him farewell we ascended a steep snowy ridge by the side of beautiful Mt. Varag, and descended to the southward into the broad fertile

valley-plain of Havatsor, watered by the clear, never-failing Khoshab Su. Though walled by precipitous mountains it is broad and flat, and bears every evidence of the greatest richness. But it is almost entirely uninhabited, and contains little but the blackened ruins of villages and broken banks of irrigating channels, terrible reminders of Turkish oppression. The awful wastefulness of the Hamidian policy is here exemplified, for this plain was once an important source of revenue to the government, and exported large quantities of grain through Van. Now nothing stirs in the valley but the chill mountain wind that is likened, in the picturesque Eastern idiom, to the breath of the curse of the dispossessed upon their oppressors.

We spent the night in a village that has been rebuilt by returned refugees, the village of Norkeui, to which we were admitted only after an armed reconnaissance by the inhabitants, who were then driving home their sheep, and feared we might have designs on them. But when they discovered we were foreigners they welcomed us gladly and gave us a comfortable place to sleep, a large room furnished with divans, so that it was not necessary to sleep on the floor.

As we ascended the valley the next day it grew narrower and rockier. We crossed many streams giving vistas of lofty mountains at first, but later the precipitous walls of the valley shut out all view of the higher peaks. Toward lunch time we

In the Havats Valley on the Way to Bashkala

came in sight of a work that might more appropriately have crowned a Rhenish rock or commanded some Savoyard valley. It was a splendidly situated castle, its massive keep rising high above the river, while a welter of lesser towers showed it was once a place of no little importance, and must have sheltered a formidable garrison. Skilfully constructed curtain walls, elaborately protected by bastions, enclosed a large area beside it, in which hundreds of men with flocks and herds could find sanctuary.

Local tradition says that this castle of Khoshab was built by an Italian, and the general plan bears out the belief. But much of the work is Seljuk Turkish and doubtless belongs to the period of that Empire, while other parts may be traced to Armenian and Kurd. The original fort on this site was certainly Urartian, for foundations of megalithic ashlar are still to be seen, like those in Van castle. There is a rock-hewn chamber, too, of great size, called today a dungeon but more likely a cistern, which is almost certainly to be traced to that people. The building is now deserted, but was the stronghold of a Kurdish chief not more than forty years ago. He stood several sieges by the Turkish troops and finally succumbed to the ravages of age. Meanwhile the Hukumet had succeeded in killing his family by treachery. So, there being no one to follow him, his tribe broke up and the troops entered his fortress of Khoshab Kala. It was soon dismantled and left half in ruins, which the ravages

of sun and frost have largely increased during the forty years that have elapsed.

We rode into the town and crossed the river by a beautiful bridge that spans it under the very shadow of the beetling keep-crowned cliff. There a *zaptieh* met us and conducted us to the house of the Kaimakam, who received us with effusive cordiality. He was a typical Young Turk official, newly arrived from Constantinople, hating his isolation in this distant station far from the flesh-pots and gaieties of the capital, provided with a thin veneer of Western civilization that served rather to accentuate his Orientalism than to conceal it, lazy, vicious, and bilious. He insisted on our lunching with him, on fried eggs, rice, and stewed chicken. He was supplied with a table and a couple of chairs, but no table gear, the dishes being served in the vessels in which they were cooked, and eaten with pieces torn from flaps of native bread.

Lunch over we set out to examine the castle, accompanied by our host and his fat, taciturn officer of *zaptiehs*. We strolled up the steep slope to the gate, halting frequently to breath the gasping, panting Turks, unaccustomed to exercise of any sort. The gate tower which we thus approached was quite different from the other parts of the castle, being round instead of square, and built of a red schistose rock, while they are of green. The entrance, though small, is elaborately decorated by a huge false doorway covered by a

pointed arch on pilasters. In its lower section is a deep niche, under which is a square opening, rimmed with heavy masonry, the real door. Above the niche, and quite as large, is an elaborate ornament in black, red, and white stones, consisting of an inscribed tablet, surmounted by a design containing three carved limestone reliefs, a pendant-shaped figure flanked by rampant lions. The effect of the whole is very striking and recalls several doorways in Mosul and the surroundings, as well as the Bab-et-Tilism at Bagdad.

Entering the tower we scrambled through a series of passages, guard-rooms, and low portals, constantly ascending until we came out on one of the lower terraces, with a splendid view of the valley. Here was a broken-in roof through which we looked into the great rock-hewn "dungeon," sufficiently beehive shaped to recall the Mycenæan tombs. It is undoubtedly Urartian for neither Turk nor Kurd could have had the patience to hew it from the living rock. Other chambers and passages we could see evidences of, but had not time to explore. There are so many doorways blocked by ruins, and passages with partly fallen roofs, that great labour would be necessary to thoroughly investigate this great warren of a castle.

By clambering through cracks and broken places in the dilapidated walls, and walking along their shelving tops, we gained entrance to the keep and ascended it to a point near the summit of

its gutted shell. The view from one of the lofty casements was superb.

Directly below, so far it made us dizzy to look, was the village, crowded mainly between the rock and the river. We could barely descry the figures of men and animals at our very feet, four hundred feet below at least. Up and down stream the valley was to be plainly seen and in front the view was cut off by the massive Bashit Dagh, one of the greatest *ziarets*, or high places, in ancient Urartu, that rises six thousand feet above the valley. Those who have reached the summit say that it is crowned by one of the finest ruins of an Eastern place of sacrifice that remain to us today, a Semitic temple such as was built by Solomon, and such as was enlarged upon in Roman times in Baalbek. We know that this form of worship spread to Urartu from the excavations on the high place of Van, now called Topra Kala.

Leaving Khoshab despite the pressing invitation of the Kaimakam to be his guests over night, we rode on to the Nestorian village of Shushmalerg, from which we proposed to tackle the Chukh Dagh pass the following day. On the road thither we met an aged man, elaborately clothed in the full robes affected by Persian *mollahs*, and wearing the green turban that proclaimed him a Seyyid, a descendant of the Prophet. He eyed us with the greatest hostility and turned away when we saluted him. He was plainly a grouchy old fanatic, that looked upon Christians as unclean and be-

The Khoshab Castle

neath his notice. The *kavass* was some distance behind us, and we noticed that he dismounted before the holy man, and passed him on foot, salaaming profoundly.

This act of dismounting is the greatest sign of respect that a native of this country can show another, and is rarely accorded today to any but royalty or holy men. But there was a time when we ourselves would have been compelled to dismount before this Seyyid and even today an Armenian would risk his life by failing to do so. During some of the periods of persecution of the Christians, under the Kalifate and under Mongol rule, no Christian was allowed to ride in a Moslem city at all, and outside he was compelled to dismount immediately a follower of the Prophet came in sight.

The village in which we stopped that night was picturesquely situated on a tumulus, that witnesses the existence of an ancient town on the same site. There were several heads of mountain sheep on a dunghill and we learned that the villagers frequently brought these animals down. The room in which we slept had several skins on the floor, but they were badly cured and moth-eaten. The river bottom was marshy and full of ducks against which Edwin Warfield made a successful sally, while the Captain and I compared notes on the difficult local topography. We had the satisfaction of supping on our companion's bag, which included a beautiful chestnut and red duck, called

in India the Brahmini, that closely resembles our American sheldrake.

The next morning we entered the maze of rounded ridges that buttress the lofty Chukh Dagh range, that still lay between us and Bash-kala. We soon got into deep snow at an elevation of eight thousand feet, which had been packed by foot passengers along the line of a narrow and very steep path. The regular caravan trail, winding up the side of one of the transverse ridges, was covered to a depth of six or eight feet, so up the ill-marked footpath we struggled. As long as horse or man remained on it, he was safe, but let him step a little to one side and down he would drop into deep feathery snow. Edwin Warfield and I had trouble enough to keep our nags from falling off, but Captain Seel's mount was a young and mettlesome Arab that had never seen snow before. He was constantly going down, and once down he would make such heroic efforts to regain the solid causeway that he would go clear over on the other side. The first steep ascent brought us to a ridge nine thousand feet in altitude, a strangely desolate spot amid jagged peaks and snow-filled valleys. The former generally reach an altitude of eleven to twelve thousand feet, but they look higher because they are crowded together and separated by deep gorges.

The masses of snow that accumulate from the constant avalanches would be incomprehensible, had we not had experience in our ascent that

The Strikingly Ornamented Gate of Khoshab Castle

showed to what a depth the snow had fallen. Melting in the valley bottoms had gone on apace, and in the high ravines we found large tunnels made by streams under the snow. We were told a story of one of these that is worth repeating. A party of Armenians fleeing from the Kurds that had burned their village and slain most of their men folk, finding their way blocked by avalanches, entered a cave-in in one of the tunnels, preferring death in such a place to Kurdish torture. No sooner had they disappeared from their pursuers than an avalanche blocked the opening, and the Kurds believed them killed. But they found their way through the tunnel to a point far down the valley, whence they escaped unseen.

It was a narrow defile that we entered at the top of the Chukh Dagh, the pass proper. The melting snow roof of the tunnel had fallen in many places, and we had to cling to the wall to avoid tumbling into the crevasses thus made. It was tiring but not very difficult and we emerged at the lower end, passing through a narrow rocky gateway, from which we could look across the broad valley of the Zab toward the Persian mountains. We met several foot passengers on the way, and a family of peasants with a couple of donkeys. The former were conscripts from the neighbourhood of Bashkala, rounded up by *zaptiehs* to be mustered in at Van, and probably die in the epidemic of typhus that decimated the inhabitants of the dirty barracks a few months later.

We found the far side of the pass less snowy than the ascent and made our way over rocks and across swollen torrents down into the valley of the Great Zab, the same river we had crossed amid far different surroundings on our way to Mosul. We could see it in the distance, a shallow blue stream of snow water, meandering in the great synclinal valley, receiving innumerable smaller streams that enter it at right angles, supplied by the melting snows of the border ranges. As it flows southward it rapidly grows, until it begins to cut deeply into its bed, forming the splendid gorges of Tyari, the home of the Nestorians, and running out through the country of the southern Kurds to the vast plain of Arbela.

The valley is desolate and uninhabited; no villages were at any time visible from our road, and only once did we encounter one, hidden away in a protected hollow. It is not as rich a place as the valleys of Armenia because of its youth; there are not yet any accumulations of silt and the bottom-land is rolling and uneven. Nevertheless it is worthy of better things than a great free pasture-land for nomad Kurds, and we saw far worse lands in a state of cultivation on the other side of the frontier, where the blighting effect of Turkish rule has not been felt.

Through this abandoned land of bare ridges and boulders we made our way to Bashkala, which we reached after ten hard hours in the saddle. We approached it by a made road which is like many

of its fellows in all parts of the Empire. It begins nowhere and ends near the top of the pass in a jumble of rocks that make the last few hundred yards quite useless. Over and over the Ottoman starts out well, on a sufficiently high aim, but the chances are that he will fall down when he comes to difficulties. Whether he tries to build a bridge or a road, carry out a political reform, or organize an army or navy, his end is always the same: a promising spurt terminates in lack of enthusiasm, any old makeshift is adopted, and all concerned unite in a shameful scramble to misappropriate the funds.

Bashkala is typical of the towns of Kurdistan, a jumble of flat-roofed stone huts straggling up a hillside, surrounded by tall poplars, and intersected by an occasional narrow muddy ravine-like street. The house of the Mutesarif was mud-plastered, and furnished *à la Turka*. The lower floor was chill and dismal, used only by servants. Upstairs we entered a small room used as a reception room lighted by a single small window, and furnished with a divan and a chair. Here we made the acquaintance of our host, Djevket Tahir Bey, a pleasant, strong-faced man, with Oriental manners, but of pure Albanian blood. He is absolutely indispensable to Turkish government on this part of the frontier, and has almost autocratic power, so far as his varying force of *zaptiehs* and troops can maintain it. He generally keeps the Kurds in a friendly state by diplomacy, but recently the with-

drawal of troops, consequent upon the Balkan trouble, has resulted in a coolness between him and a neighbouring chief. He told us that he expected a force from Van in a few days and if we would remain as his guests for a week, he would promise to show us a battle.

He was much interested in modern methods, though a life spent in the eastern part of Asiatic Turkey does not develop any general fund of information regarding their applications. Among his aspirations was the installation in his capital of a telephone system. He had imported from Russia a set of six instruments, including an exchange; but when they had arrived he had found it quite beyond him, or his telegraph clerk, to put them together. The instruments had lain idle for months when we arrived, but they had not been forgotten, and we were begged to help with our scientific experience in the matter of fitting together the bewildering maze of receivers, transmitters, coils, lengths of wire, batteries, chemicals, other paraphernalia.

Now a Russian telephone instrument is fearfully and wonderfully made, two or three times as large as one of our clumsiest wall contrivances, and studded with shiny German silver knobs and screws without rhyme or reason. Patiently we struggled to trace out the intricate wiring, eliminate the hardware that appeared for decoration only, and connect the batteries so that the working parts would do business. Once the puzzle was

unravelled the delighted Mutesarif was introduced to one of the instruments, and listened to a long oration from Captain Seel in another room. Raising his voice to its highest pitch he roared a fierce reply that made the Captain drop the receiver and clap his hand to his outraged ear.

It was not long before we had strung a wire to the police post, and allowed the stout *zaptieh* officer to speak with his lieutenant there. The expression on his face was one of the utmost surprise, when he heard the familiar voice, and he could say nothing for some time but,—"Allah! Allah! Allah!" Once they had gotten over their surprise, and learned not to shout at the instrument, our friends were as tickled as children with a new toy. Djevket Bey was constantly rushing to call the police post on matters of instant moment. The conversation would be something like this: "Is this Reshid Bimbashi? Do you hear me? Where are you? I can hear you! I will talk with you again!"

So pleased was he with his new plaything that nothing would suit him but a wireless telegraph. Sitting at dinner that evening he did nothing but talk of how he would confound the Kurds with it.

Two very pleasant days we spent in this mountain town and then we set out to cross the valley to the Persian frontier. We were armed with letters to the Mudir of Deir, the last frontier official, and to a Kurdish Agha who watches over the marches. To this gentleman we contemplated presenting

ourselves, and trusted to his friendship to see us safely through the frontier region, into Persian territory. We bade adieu to the Mutesarif and to Captain Seel, and set off to cross the Zab once more.

The country was absolutely desolate until we came to the squalid mountain village of Deir, built on a hill above the river. The Mudir received us jovially and sought to detain us, but we could spare time only to glance at the splendid old monastery of St. Bartholomew, that gives the town its name. It is distinguished by a large and imposing church in the finest Armenian style. But the great doorway was walled up, and no hospitable monk was there to receive us. The Turk is not a fool to have a potentially hostile body on his very frontier.

The scenery was very fine as we crossed the shallow river and ascended into the eight thousand foot pass that marks the watershed between the Tigris and Lake Urmi. It grew wilder and more desolate as we ascended until we reached a lofty valley, with snow-peaks on either side. Large flocks of sheep were being driven to a marshy hollow. All was still and dark, the clouds settled in black mist on the hilltops, and we pressed by the sheep into the broad, easily defended cirque where lay the village of Haidar Agha, "friend of the Turks," but caring little for any government. The people were Shekak Kurds, a wild lot, who have lived on the frontier for generations. They have

all the vices of professional bandits, but all the virtues as well. They are proud, hospitable, generous to their guests, independent, and merry. Those we saw were mostly slender, oval faced, rather dark in complexion, with small hands and feet. Their chiefs are always aristocratic looking, and show their breeding in manner and dress, a quality that doubtless comes from associating with Persians.

Haidar Agha's house, a plain, mud-plastered stone building, long and narrow, stood a little to one side of the mean stone hovels of the villagers. There we were received by Haidar himself. Entering a small anteroom, where stood braziers and other paraphernalia of the kitchen, we were ushered into a room about thirty feet long and half as wide, mud-walled and mud-floored, with a very few small dingy windows high in the wall. At the upper end were some benches, and the floor in front was covered with felt rugs ornamented with geometric designs in brown and black, sheep of those colours being as common as white in the Kurdish flocks.

Haidar Agha was decidedly a gentleman. About five feet ten, tall for a Kurd, he stooped slightly from age. His rugged face was deeply lined and ornamented with a huge dark brown moustache. His two sons, aged about fourteen and eighteen, resembled him strikingly, having the same long, narrow face and chin, the same quick eye and air of alertness. They were quite differ-

ently dressed from any tribe we had seen before. Their costume was of a dark green cloth resembling heavy serge; a coat with brass buttons, fitting closely to the waist and provided with a kilted skirt reaching to the knees, and a pair of close-fitting trousers, were topped by a tall hat of soft felt, wound round and round with black and grey silk scarves; the boys wore Russian riding boots, but the father was content with shoes, also of Muscovite manufacture.

The rest of the household consisted of servants dressed in the same style as their masters but more coarsely. They were all armed and carried their belts and bandoliers in the house, though their masters threw aside the heavy things on coming in. Haidar Agha himself did not wear any at all, but kept his rifle at hand in a corner. The servants were respectful, remaining at the lower end of the room except when summoned, but by no means obsequious. They entered into the conversation at times and were occasionally referred to.

We sat in conversation with the chief, and a Turkish officer, for some time, but with little result, for we had to talk through two interpreters. The Turk represented the claim of his government to suzerainty over this country, but his position seemed to be that of a tolerated guest, rather than of an overlord. The friendship of the Kurds seemed to be rather with Russia than with Turkey, as is natural, for the Russians spare no pains to gain their friendship, while the hand of Abdul-

Hamid was lately heavy on their necks. Most of their fellow-Shekaklis are in Persian territory and, though subject to no man, are friendly with the Czar's representatives. Among other evidences of Muscovite aggression we noted that our hosts were provided with Russian army rifles and ammunition. This is not greatly in their favour for those arms are clumsy, ugly, and ill-balanced, inferior to the cast-off German military Mausers with which most of the Turkish troops, and by far the majority of the Hakkiari Kurds, are armed. Nevertheless it is doubtless better to receive a Russian rifle as a gift than to pay a very large price to a Turkish official for a Mauser.

The domestic arrangements of our hosts, revealed after we had dined with Haidar Agha—the sons waited until their elders were finished—and were ready to retire, throws no little light on the advanced state of civilization of these frontier tribes. Instead of rolling up in a blanket or quilt, as was customary among the Hakkiari among whom we stopped, Haidar Agha and his sons had elaborate beds prepared for them by the serving men. They were made of several felts, laid one upon the other, a number of quilts on them, and a quilt and heavy military blanket for cover. Each man had a servant to assist him in disrobing, who laid out his master's clothes and arms with all the manner of a well-trained valet. Having assisted their masters the servants prepared their own beds at the lower end of the room.

The next morning Edwin Warfield gave the neighbours an illustration of what can be done with an American rifle, in a keen competition with Haidar's sons and his major domo. The target was a Standard Oil tin, still bearing the stamp of its place of manufacture, Bayonne, New Jersey. It stood on a neighbouring hillside at a convenient distance, and toward it the younger son sent shot after shot from his clumsy, crutch-butted, large-bored old Russian cannon, until his youthful arms could no longer support the weight of the unwieldy invention. Then the neat automatic Winchester came into play, and Edwin Warfield easily filled the tin with holes without removing the rifle from his shoulder. Murmurs of applause rose from the delighted crowd, and the older boy tried his skill. He fired several shots, having a manful struggle with the clumsy bolt every time he threw a new cartridge into the breech. Finally one of his heavy projectiles—I cannot call them bullets—struck the tin, carried away all of one side, and hurled it to the ground. That was enough for the Kurds who hailed their young chief as the winner of the match. But he was no fool and made no secret of his appreciation of the greater accuracy, neatness, and ease of handling that characterize the American arm.

Accompanied by this pleasant and handsome young man, and one of the servants, we set out from Haidar's village, taking regretful leave of our hospitable bandit. The country we rode through

A Kurdish Ploughman on the Frontier

was a great wilderness of bare, ragged rocks, and ravines in which roared fierce torrents of green snow water. But occasionally we found a little patch of cultivation with a village in some protected spot nearby. The latter are of two types, unprotected Kurdish villages, homes of the dominant race, and walled, fortified villages, the homes of Nestorian Christians who till their little isolated holdings with arms ever by.

As we got farther from the frontier the villages increased in frequency, and the very hillsides were cultivated wherever the slope was low enough to hold soil. But even there the arable land only amounted to about ten per cent. of the total. It was the season for ploughing and we saw many a strange outfit. Buffaloes were quite common in spite of the altitude,—over eight thousand feet,—and we often saw ploughs drawn by a pair of them and a pair of little scrubby bulls. The ploughman managed the former but the latter were usually piloted by a little boy perched on the yoke. The contrast between the two kinds of cattle was very striking, for the bulls were as like the huge black buffaloes as a donkey is like a draft horse. The ploughmen wore various costumes, chiefly Kurdish but sometimes more like that of the Persian peasant.

About the middle of the morning we met a young gentleman whose physiognomy left no doubt that he was another son of Haidar Agha.

He was clearly pleased at encountering us and immediately joined our party.

A jolly party it was too. The son who had accompanied us from the start continued his friendly rivalry with Edwin Warfield in renewed trials of skill with the rifle. Every little dicky bird that appeared perched on a rock he stalked with the greatest care. If there was no better cover he would remove his hat and push it along ahead of him. If the bird did not take flight and spoil it all he would rest his piece on the hat, take careful aim, and fire,—from a distance of thirty to fifty yards. The almost unvarying program was a frightful roar, a cloud of gas, a spatter of lead on the rock, and a badly frightened cock-sparrow. Edwin Warfield's Anglo-Saxon phlegm did not permit him to indulge in the almost Gallic enthusiasm of his rival. But he was fond of his rifle and kept an eye open for a chance to prove it. This came in the shape of a bluejay, high up on the top of a cañon wall, a hundred yards away, but clearly outlined against the sky. Dismounting he slipped a cartridge into the breech, aimed, and fired. The sharp crack of the Winchester offended no one's ears. There was no gas, and the bird tumbled down the rock. The young Kurd immediately scrambled up after it, retrieved it with great gusto, and carried it on his saddle all day, constantly admiring the skilfully placed bullet-hole in the breast.

His brother was a youth of twenty or there-

abouts, and proved to be as friendly and jolly a companion as any traveller could desire. He was interested in Edwin Warfield's sun helmet, that had originally come from the Philippines and proved as effectual in mountain travel as it had in the tropics. After he had examined it he proposed a change of headgear, which was effected with ludicrous results. The helmet came down well over the Kurd's ears, while the American bore the lofty felt hat perched so high on his head that it served to accentuate his already considerable height. The younger brother fairly broke down with roars of laughter, in which I heartily joined.

Early in the afternoon we entered a cañon in a comparatively recent flow of lava. On each side we were shut in by high walls of columnar basalt, along the foot of which ran the trail, now in, now out of the mountain stream. In this place of uncertain footing we encountered two sorry-looking peasants, with a couple of donkeys loaded with firewood. These our young chieftains accosted merrily, bandying jokes back and forth with them. I suggested by signs that I would like to photograph a hold-up. Our escort caught on immediately and aimed their guns at the poor peasants, who understood perfectly what was expected of them and submitted with twinkling eyes and merry faces to the unique experience of being held up in the interests of art.

Making our way down the ravine, until tributary streams had enlarged it and swollen its

torrent to a fair-sized river, we came to Chari, the mountain stronghold of the principal chief of the Shekak tribe, Ismail Agha.

In the midst of a typical village rose a large brick building, much like a Persian town house, but built with an eye for defence, and, like most important buildings in the Near East, half ruinous. Riding up to the door we dismounted and were received by a Russian in uniform, who led us up to the upper floor and did the honours. We seated ourselves in a large room with numerous high windows, partly glazed with stained glass. The walls and ceiling were badly plastered, but the floor was entirely covered with Persian rugs, of varied hue and pattern. It was much finer than any room in Van, either in the residence of the Vali, or of the commandant, but much like the rooms used for the same purpose by wealthy Persians. Squatting on their heels around the walls and crowding the lower end of the room were Ismail's retainers in the picturesque tribal costume, well provided with ammunition, their rifles on the floor beside them or leaning against the wall. In a place of honour at the upper end of the room sat an ascetic white-bearded *mollah*, in flowing robes and white turban.

When we had talked for some minutes with the Russian—through two interpreters—and shown him a letter of commendation from M. Ulferieff, we became aware of a stir about the door and the company rose expectantly. Gravely, royally,

like a French monarch at a levée, entered Ismail Agha, the terror of the frontier, the notorious bandit, the man for whose favour both Czar and Sultan were bidding at that very time. He was a slight short man, with a light complexion and brown moustache. He wore a black costume, black scarves around his hat, Russian shoes of very light leather, and yellow pigskin putties. With a solemn face, but a light step, he walked to a chair at the upper end of the room. Before seating himself he greeted us gravely, then sat down and turned to us, before speaking to any one else, and saluted in the Mohammedan fashion, by raising the hand to the breast and the forehead, several times. The Russian and the *mollah* then received formal greetings, and not until after that did he smile. His greetings to our guides and a few others in the room were cordial and friendly, given with the air of a mountain chief, not with that of an Oriental potentate assumed in greeting us.

The Russian was explaining our nationality and the purpose of our journey when we were served with fried eggs and bread, with tea in large glasses, *à la Russe*. We had heard much of Ismail's light cavalry, and hoped we might have an opportunity to see some of his men ride and shoot from the saddle, an exercise in which they are said to be unusually proficient. We therefore flattered him much about his soldiers, and their superiority to the Turks, but succeeded only in tickling his vanity.

The history of this picturesque character is most interesting, and it may be appropriate to repeat one of the stories that are current about him in Urmi and Van. He owes his position as chief of the tribe to the murder of his brother Jaffar Agha, by a rascally Vali of Urmi, Mejid es Sultaneh by name. He sent the Shekak chief a promise that if he would come to Urmi for a conference he would be treated with all honour and allowed to depart the city in safety. Trusting to this guarantee he came and conferred for some time with the Vali. He then rode out of the gate on his return to the hills, but was recalled by a messenger on some pretext. Returning with his escort to the Vali's house, he entered with one or two followers as before. But no sooner were they seated in the reception room than a group of men opened fire from a doorway, and killed them like rats in a trap. The escort without suspected treachery, and tried to break in, but were overwhelmed by superior numbers and those that survived had to flee for their lives. Ismail was then in Khoi, north of Lake Urmi, and there received the news of his brother's murder. Gathering together what possessions he had, he fled to his mountain stronghold and became the implacable foe of the Persian régime in Urmi. From the time of his accession to the chiefship in 1902 until the Russian invasion in 1911, he was the friend of the Turks, who claimed suzerainty over his tribe and backed them up in their constant raids into

Urmi plain, raids that made it necessary to keep the walls of Urmi in repair, and sent train after train of terrified villagers to seek refuge within them.

The "soldiers" of the Vali were quite useless against them. A powerful landholder would demand protection for his villages and on account of his influence at Tehran the Vali would have to despatch what men he could. After a few hours they would ride back to the city saying they had seen enormous bodies of Kurds, like clouds around the villages, and had fallen back before them to defend the city. As a matter of fact there would be no one on the roads but refugees from villages burned the night before, whose last possessions served to line the saddle-bags of the cowardly troops.

This sort of thing went on for years and Ismail became a rich man, through plundering Persians and receiving bonuses from Abdul-Hamid. But the Young Turk revolution failed to obtain his sympathy, for it was an army movement that took all the prizes for the regular officers, and left slender pickings for the old Sultan's pampered irregulars. Thus began a coolness that was encouraged by the Russians. They came in to Urmi first to protect the roads, and later to occupy the country. This spoiled Ismail's occupation of raiding, but there was little enough left to raid, and the Russians invited him to Tiflis, flattered him skilfully, and presented him with a military

decoration. Thus it happens that Russian officers are welcome at Chari, and Ismail Agha threatens his erstwhile friends in Turkey with a Russian military rifle.

Before we left Chari we persuaded our bandit-host to pose for a photograph in the midst of his followers. His posture was a study in self-conscious glory—he might have been Czar of all the East!

Riding down the gorge toward Lake Urmi we soon discovered that our gallant Ali Chaush did not know the way, and as we had declined Ismail's kind offer of an escort, we had no other guide. The stream was of no mean size, rarely fordable, and usually bordered by banks of volcanic pebbles of astonishing variety of colour and crystal form. But lofty walls of basalt columns hemmed us in on both sides, and at times the track we were following ended in a place where the swirling current had undermined the bank to the very wall. In one such place we waded along the foot and climbed out where the bank appeared beyond. But the footing was bad and my horse, in seeking to reach dry ground, fell into a deep sink under the steep bank. I had to swim for it, as well as the horse, but no harm was done except to the film in the camera, which got a good wetting, resulting in the loss of Ismail's portrait.

Three times we followed goat tracks far up the sides of the gorge, only to find a return to the river necessary. But finally we succeeded in clambering

out by a steep and circuitous path, over boulders and slippery places that were not designed for the use of nervous travellers. But neither we nor our muleteers came under that head, and out we came on to a plateau, with all the loads safe, and the road we should have taken just before us. There was our Russian friend too, and not far away we could make out the poplar-lined gardens of Dilman, the chief town of the Persian district of Salmas.

Dilman is really a collection of villages built amid vineyards and orchards, with fields of alfalfa and wheat lying beyond, all surrounded by high mud walls. The roads are almost invariably bordered by poplars, under which run streams of clear water, conducted from the mountains that ring the city. Each village has its own religion; they are Moslem, Jewish, and Christian, the last being divided into Nestorians, Chaldæans, Protestant Syrians, and Armenians.

Passing in the dark of evening through the outlying gardens we came upon a Russian picket, easily passed with the help of M. Ulferieff's letter and the explanations of our Russian companion. This gentleman was a government engineer, and though we could not talk with him except by two interpreters, he was very courteous to us and escorted us through village after village to our destination, the Syrian village of Heftouan. Here we arrived long after dark at the house of a native physician, Dr. David Johannan, who had been

educated in the United States by the Urmi Presbyterian mission. He received us with the greatest hospitality, and after a late but excellent dinner we were glad to find refuge in sleep after our arduous day.

Leaving Dilman we rode through groves and walled gardens, with their open channels of clean water, where big black buffaloes were being washed by small children, and so into the desolate hills that border Lake Urmi, that was occasionally visible on our left. Only large villages have survived the depredations of the Kurds and in one of these we planned to spend the night. We missed it however and came instead to the smaller village of Gulunji, in the plain near the lake-shore. We were received with great courtesy by the headman, and lodged in his house.

All the village notables came to see us including the *mollah*, an old man whose thin dark features and priestly *aba* and turban gave him the appearance of being an Arab. His clerical education had included Arabic, and we were able to talk with him in that language. He and the headman were quite astonished at our unfamiliarity with the local languages. That we did not speak Turkish, the language of this part of Persia, they knew. But did we not speak Farsi (Persian) or Kermanji (Kurdish)? No, we spoke neither of those tongues.

"Surely," said the *mollah*, "the Sahib does not speak Syriac or Armenian?" (the Christian languages of the neighbourhood). "Then the Sahib

speaks Russian!" But we did not, either of us, speak Russian and the good priest was utterly at a loss to know what we did speak.

So I explained that our native language was Inglizi (English), and he confessed that he was quite without experience of that tongue. I then expressed surprise that his reverence was unfamiliar with French, German, Latin, and Greek, and when I claimed to be conversant with all he seemed quite impressed.

"And does the Sahib also read those tongues? Then the Sahib is indeed a *mirza*—a scholar!"

The Russian officers stationed at Gavalan, where we had intended to stop, evidently resented our passing on, and having heard of our arrival at Gulunji, rode over to see us. They came in on our gathering of villagers, two burly men in pearl grey top coats with green trimmings and clanking sabres. They perused M. Ulferieff's letter, which was by this time well thumbed, and inquired about our journey. One of them was quite talkative, and lorded it over the villagers, ordering them about freely. They did not resent it, however, and seemed to have considerable respect, and no little liking for this tyrant of theirs.

The next day brought us to Urmi after a long ride down the lake-shore, passing camel caravans and ruined khans at first, and later entering the cultivated plain. For hours we rode through lanes of garden walls and budding trees, between blossoming orchards and green alfalfa fields.

Often we met Russian patrols who let us pass when they had seen our letter, and frequently we saw squadrons of Cossacks at drill in the green fields. As we neared the city we passed through villages on the outskirts, and met peasants coming out from market.

Our destination was the American mission, but we did not know how to reach it. This difficulty was overcome, however, by a fortunate encounter with a Syrian physician, educated, like our host at Dilman, in America. Quite by accident we met him, and in plain English he directed us. Soon after we arrived at the mission "college" in the outskirts of the city, and found ourselves once again among our own people.

CHAPTER XIV

URMI AND TABRIZ, THE CITIES OF AZERBAIJAN

URMI is the chief city of the western section of Azerbaijan, the most fertile, and, partly for that reason, the most harassed province in Persia. So constantly has it been conquered by horde after horde of invaders, driven out of the eastern deserts by the ever-varying climate of those regions of successive plenty and want, that its ancient history has been lost to us. But in recent times it has been successively violated and held for a time by Arabs, Seljuks, Mongols, Ottomans, Persians, and Russians. Once a part of the Aryan empires of Media and Persia, it was later ravaged by the Turanian Parthians and Scythians, to whom it was an important base in their great conflicts with the Roman Empire. After them came another Persian empire, and with the fall of the Sassanids, the Arab conquest of Persia, which added Azerbaijan to the lands of the kalif. The Seljuks passed through it on their way to found the first Turkish empire in Asia Minor, and on their heels came Genghis Khan, who made Maragha, opposite Urmi, the capital from which he planned to destroy

the last vestiges of the rule of the Kalifate. He paved the way for his descendant Tamerlane, who reduced the cities of the devoted province to heaps of smoking ruins, on his way to Asia Minor, whence he brought back the Ottoman sultan, a prisoner, from his desolated capital. So terribly was the population depleted by this blighting whirlwind from the Turkoman steppes that the province fell an easy prey in later years to the growing Ottoman power, and ever since has been a bone of contention between the sultan and the shah. But the present decade has seen Russian rule firmly established, and today Azerbaijan, held by no less than forty thousand troops, is in reality a Muscovite province. Nor has this last transition been less bloody than many an earlier one, thanks to the plundering of villages, street massacres, and the ghastly gibbets that ringed the walls of Tabriz only a few months before our visit.

This latest travail has resulted in peace, however, and comparative personal safety, so that Azerbaijan is resuming her ancient position as the granary of Iran. American cultivators and reapers are being introduced through Russia to replace by mechanical means the hands that will work no more, and the vineyards that can supply half the world with raisins are again bringing forth their harvest of purple and gold.

Though it is part of modern Persia few of that people are to be found among the inhabitants of the province. Nor are there many descendants of the

ancient Medes except in the southernmost part, where the Mukri Kurds probably represent the purest blood of that race. Repeated Turanian invasions have resulted in a nearly complete repopulation with people of Turkoman origin, so that in feature and complexion, as well as in language, Azerbaijan is a Turkish province. Persian is still the official language, and the principal literary language, but it is not understood in the bazaars, and to be able to read it is to earn the title of *mirza*, or scholar. But the manners and customs of the country are chiefly Persian, especially in the cities. The Persian dress has been adopted, and Persian love of intrigue and habitual mendacity have wrought havoc with the rugged desert stock. The religion too is the heretical Persian Mahommedanism, the Shia schism, although the majority of the Turks and the Kurds cling to their allegiance to the more orthodox Sunni persuasion.

Azerbaijan is also the home of numbers of Assyrians, members originally of the Nestorian church, who migrated into the Urmi region during the Sassanian empire. Their church has been much broken up by the efforts of Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox, and American Presbyterian missionaries. The first of these claim the greatest number of proselytes, although their work did not begin until after that of the Americans. They owe their success to the use of far from scrupulous means, such as intimidation, and working upon personal disagreements. Their chief enemies have

been the Russians, who, backed by their government, succeeded at one time in getting a firman from the shah prohibiting Christians from changing their religion. A little backshish to the officials was enough to get this interpreted to mean that rendering allegiance to the Russian Patriarch was no change from the Nestorian religion, but entering the Roman fold was.

The Americans began their work nearly one hundred years ago, in a little Nestorian village on a lofty ridge that borders the plain of Urmi, some two or three hours' drive from the city. Today they have schools and a church within the walls, and a large boys' school, called the "college," and a hospital, in a beautiful high-walled compound outside. Here we were the guests of Dr. Packard, the resident physician. The pretty compound was rich with fresh spring grass, the tall poplars had just burst into leaf, and outside all was springlike and colourful with flowering almond and pomegranate trees above a thick rich carpet of deep green alfalfa. The mountain air—Urmi is more than four thousand feet above the sea—was soft and balmy, newly washed by the spring rains.

Most of the Nestorians wear European clothes, but there were several students from hill villages wearing the Hakkiari costume, and in the city we often saw Kurds of that and the Mukri tribe, always in full native dress. The lower class townsfolk wear a long loose tunic reaching to the knee and girt with a sash, very loose trousers, clumsy

shoes, and a black cup-shaped hat of felt, or of a coarse cloth made in Russia for that trade to resemble astrakhan. In cold weather they don a sleeveless jacket of felt or frieze, or an *aba*, a garment that came in with Mohammedanism and is universally worn by the priesthood. The costume of the wealthier classes, however, more nearly approaches the European style. They wear a long frock coat, generally of blue broadcloth, with a military collar and brass or silver buttons, with trousers to match, Russian shoes, and a black astrakhan hat.

The women never appear on the street except in a great shapeless, balloonlike garment covering the head and ending in voluminous trousers. There is a narrow slit for the eyes, protected by a veil, or a bit of gauze sewn across it. The city women are never allowed to be seen in any other garb except by their nearest relatives. But the peasant women on returning from market wear their street clothes only as far as the gate, where they promptly remove them, pack their purchases in the baggy trousers, and trudge homeward in the costume of the *anderun*, the women's apartments. This consists of a short vest, the most abbreviated of abbreviated skirts, reaching scarcely halfway to the knee, and long close-fitting drawers. This ridiculous costume was prescribed by the first Shah to visit Europe, Nasr-ed-Din, and the inspiration was a Parisian ballet. The fact that he was able to force such a ludicrous costume, quite

contrary to pre-existing ideas of propriety, not only on the women of the court, but on those of remote country districts also, is a striking commentary on the autocratic power of the Shah.

In order to reach the bazaars from our stopping place, we had to pass through the quarter occupied by the Russians. A large group of ugly brick buildings, in the Russian imitation of European architecture, furnishes accommodation and offices for the consul and the principal military officers, while other officials and hangers-on live nearby. There is a small barracks also; but most of the troops are quartered elsewhere. They were constantly at drill in the orchards opposite the consul's compound, both infantry and Kossacks. Here they have taken for military use part of the road built by the missionaries, with funds sent from America to give employment to suffering Nestorians. All civilians are compelled to drive through the mud beside the metalled section, and the good missionaries have the doubtful satisfaction of seeing the boots of the Russian infantry kept dry, while they themselves scarcely know whether they will get by without being mired.

Just beyond is one of the gates of the city and a bridge of the now disused moat. A short distance within is the American church, and beyond a maze of narrow, dirty, brick-walled streets. When the Russians first came the soldiers kept getting lost, and wandering aimlessly in search of the bazaars. So every corner on the way was

marked with arrows indicating the proper direction. Following these welcome signs we found our way to a typical Persian market-place, much like that of Bagdad. The stalls on either side and the vaulted roof were all of brick, and the long winding passages were lit only by small windows in the vaults and squinch arches that spanned the roadway. Shafts of light, full of eddying dust, cut the gloom from them, but did not dispel the half-darkness in which the scene was plunged.

There are some open squares where small dealers sit under a makeshift shelter, with baskets of grain, dried fruits, or country produce before them. One or two large khans are the resort of wealthy merchants, and there things are more orderly, marketing is done by wholesale, and goods are stacked in packing cases. In one of these we found a large court with a pool in the centre where men were washing and drinking indiscriminately. Beside it were thousands of boxes of raisins, for shipment to Russia, and around the court dingy counting-houses where business was going on as quietly as it would in the West.

Urmi bazaar is full of fascinating scenes, typical of Oriental life, such scenes as we are accustomed to associate with the tales of the *Arabian Nights*. As in Bagdad the colouring is subdued and quiet, on account of the prevalence of dust from the roadways. The mosques are not conspicuous but there are one or two domes, covered with

beautifully executed tile work, which is the glory of Persian architecture.

Outside Urmi there is a memorial of a still older religion, the faith of the two early Persian empires founded by the teachings of Zarathustra, or Zoroaster. This man was the great reformer of Magianism, the old nature worship of the Iranian tribes. He was born near the present Urmi in the seventh century B.C. He taught that with the help of the Principle of Good, Ahuramazda, whose symbol was fire, man must fight all his life against Ahriman, the Principle of Evil. To enable man to come in direct contact with the former, he instituted an elaborate ritual, including the maintenance of a sacred fire.

The ashes of this fire and the sacrifices burned by it were held sacred, and kept in certain allotted places, where in time great mounds accumulated. These are the last vestiges of his teachings in the birthplace of the prophet. None of his followers remain in Urmi today, though there are small colonies in various parts of Persia, notably at Yezd and Kerman, and an influential but decreasing group of colonies in India, centring around Bombay, whither they fled from Moslem persecution.

The ash mounds are being steadily depleted by the peasants, who use the material for fertilizing their fields, exactly as those of Egypt use the débris of ancient cities in the Nile valley. In the course of their digging many strange objects come

to light, which are often brought to foreigners and sold as *antikas*. These are chiefly bronze instruments and bones. Among the latter, a find fraught with sinister suggestion was a group of five skulls, with copper nails embedded in the bone, showing that death had been caused by hammering those objects into the brain. The mass of mounds is rapidly diminishing and in a short time they will have disappeared unless Russian intervention serves to preserve them for posterity. They have never been excavated by scholars, because an imperial firman gave France the sole right of excavation in Persia. Savants of that country have done excellent work in many places, but like the dog in the manger have prevented others from developing what they were unable to take up.

The city of Urmi is situated some ten miles from the great salt lake of the same name, which lies between the city and Tabriz, the provincial capital. Until quite recently the only means of crossing was by taking one of the wretched native sailing boats, mere tubs with stubby poplar masts. With a good wind the passage might be made in two days; without, seven or eight might be spent in the blazing sun on short commons of food and water. In either event the place of landing was far from certain. As the lake is very shallow, nowhere more than thirty feet in depth, and bordered by broad stretches of salt marsh on the far side, it not infrequently happened that the

unskilled navigators ran aground half a mile or a mile from *terra firma*. Unenviable indeed was the predicament of an acquaintance of ours, who having spent several days on the bosom of the bitter waters, was compelled to wade for a mile through soft mud and water, with a bubble of marsh gas bursting under his nose at every step. Once ashore, he had to walk six miles to the shelter of a village with his clothes caked with salt, and even there he found there was not sufficient fresh water to make a bath possible.

Fortunately we found a large motor-boat running regularly, three times a week, from shore to shore, under Russian management. We had seen the last of pack animals at Urmi, and it was in a Russian "phaeton," with a rascally youth in Tartar costume for driver, that we set out for the lake-shore. As usual we were sped on our way by our hosts, who drove with us through the orchards and cultivated fields that surround the city. Having bidden them farewell we drove on, through a country but little cultivated, and arrived in due time at the lake, having paused only a few times to tie a broken axle up with string.

A little group of buildings and a wharf lay beside a protected bay, where the waters of the lake had undermined the clay bank. We found shelter in a house, evidently intended for the entertainment of travellers, though it boasted of but a single mud-walled room. The boat arrived soon after, and we were warned to prepare for an early start.

In about eight hours we landed at a long wharf where there was a grand rush on the part of ourselves and our fellow-passengers to secure a carriage for the long day's drive to Tabriz. Our unfamiliarity with the language was no little hindrance in this. The carriages are part of the government postal system, and were in charge of a Persian official who gave precedence to his own people. Next came the uniformed Russians, and as conveyances were scarce, when the turn of the Christian and uniformless Americans came there was nothing to be had. So we settled down to spend the day in that desolate spot, with nothing but warehouses and a station containing the offices of the transportation company. The latter was a pleasant enough, airy brick building and the two Russian clerks gave us the freedom of the place, offering us their desks when we wanted to write and their floor to sleep on at night.

As there were no hills for some miles inland, nothing but a waste of salt-encrusted clay, there was nothing of interest but the lake. This is the most saline body of water in the world, and so heavy that we found we could sit in it with head and shoulders out of water. As a result swimming is no easy matter for the water is so buoyant that the strokes of arms and legs are mostly in the air. Fish cannot live in the water, and the only crustacean known to exist is a very primitive shrimp; the newly hatched young, about a quarter of an inch long, transparent, and almost shapeless, we

found in the water in countless myriads. Microscopic examination reveals a few very low forms of animal life, but on the whole, Lake Urmi is the deadest of dead seas. We experienced no smarting from the salt, except when it touched abrasions in the skin, or entered the eyes, when it was quite painful.

There is a tradition among the Nestorians that St. Thomas the Apostle crossed Lake Urmi on his way to found the Christian church that exists today on the Malabar coast. The way he crossed it, though less remarkable than similar cases recorded in the lives of more western saints, was nevertheless miraculous, for the story says he walked on the surface of the waves. Every year the Christian population of Urmi and the neighbourhood go down to the shore to celebrate the event and enjoy a ceremonial bath, said to have remarkable curative powers on that sacred anniversary.

One day on the shore of Lake Urmi passed pleasantly and profitably enough. But evening brought no carriages, and a second day of hot, dry sun, brackish drinking water, and limited cuisine held out no very pleasant prospects. But that second evening witnessed the arrival of a group of five Russian infantry officers on their way to Urmi, a sight that cheered us mightily, and led to a hasty arrangement with the *chef de poste* for an early start next morning.

The Russians, with the careless bonhomie that

alternates in their kind with most brutal cruelty and rampant injustice, insisted on our joining them at dinner. This was a spread of no little magnitude at which flowed quantities of vodka and Caucasian wine. It ended with toasts in halting French or German, to the American army, its officers, the American nation, its President, *et cætera ad infinitum*, to which we of course responded with appropriate toasts to Holy Russia, her armies, and her Czar. The final ceremony was of course a sing-song, our hosts favouring us with sentimental national anthems and with solemn hymn-like tunes.

They were sound asleep when we departed at dawn next day for our drive to Tabriz. It was a long day's drive, thirty-five or forty miles, through villages scattered in dry valleys between khaki-coloured hills. At first the only other wayfarers were wagons loaded with boxes of raisins for the Russian market, making their way by slow stages to the military road that leads to the frontier. But later we entered upon that fine metalled highway, and encountered carriages, caravans of horses and camels, and a huge motor-truck.

The villages were fresh with new spring life, and everywhere were men doing the many chores that the season demands. Grape vines were being trained on new poles, grain fields ploughed, bricks moulded for repairs to the houses, and garden walls rebuilt. The last is perhaps the most picturesque occupation of the Persian gardener and appeals to

the natural fondness we all have for playing in the mud. The walls are built of layers about two feet high and equally thick, and three men are needed to replace the top layer when it is washed away by winter frost and spring rain. One mixes the mud, while the second stands at the foot of the wall and receives it in his hands from the shovel, passing it up to the third who squats on his heels on the top of the wall and slaps the double handfuls in place. Such a scene we encountered over and over again.

Many of the villages were exquisite studies in subdued, harmonious colouring, full of Persian genre subjects that would last an artist a lifetime. The houses of sun-dried brick, open watercourses, tall shade trees, poplars or pines, and halted wagon-loads of raisins made a picturesque setting, in which were enacted little comedies of Eastern village life, to which the dull-coloured garments and unfamiliar types of the participants added a quality that gave interest to the most everyday affairs.

The final stage of the journey was across a broad, ill-watered plain, bordered by high barren hills. Tabriz itself lies in a distant corner, with the twelve-thousand foot mass of the ancient volcano Sahend rising, just to the south, a huge agglomeration of deeply seamed ridges. From the nearly barren plain the greenery of the city crowned by a few domes was a welcome sight indeed. As we came nearer and entered the sub-

Persians Rebuilding a Garden Wall near Urmi

urbs we became aware that we were approaching a great commercial centre, not a mere provincial market town like Urmi. There was the depot of the Russian transportation company that runs numbers of heavy motor trucks along the military road that takes the place of rail communication. There was a custom-house too, and the government postal station where part of our carriage hire was collected. An automobile was before the door, its driver haggling with the official over the road tax. A Russian officer addressed us before we were permitted to pass but saluted courteously on reading letters we carried from M. Ulferieff and the consul at Urmi. There were men about in European clothes, and, horror of horrors, derby hats. Nor did these signs of civilization please or amuse us, mingled though they were with unmistakable signs of the Orient, Persian costumes, clumsy buffalo carts, and tumble-down garden walls. We could not help feeling that these things were an unwarranted intrusion into the pleasant, picturesque ways that we had learned to know and enjoy. We began to understand why China kept its doors closed so long, and why Persia herself refused time after time to accept the favours of Western diplomacy. There is something irreconcilable between West and East, and as the former is undoubtedly the more vigorous, it shatters the ideals of its more delicate rival.

As we rode through the streets we passed through a quarter of budding Western character,

an imitation of the Russian imitation of European style, a sort of underdone Tiflis. But we found that beyond it we could get into the unspoiled East, the same narrow, dusty, odorous streets, lined with brown brick walls. So we came to the American consulate, the first since Bagdad, and entered the pleasant Persian garden around which is built the old mansion that several successive representatives of Uncle Sam have occupied. Here we found the first mail from home that had reached us for three months. Then we returned to our carriage and made our way to the American mission, where we had long since been invited to make our headquarters, with an old acquaintance, Mr. Fred Jessup.

As capital of one of the most frequently invaded provinces in Asia, Tabriz might readily claim to be the most tragic of cities. But she has also suffered almost beyond comparison from the convulsions of nature. Before the terrible sack by Tamerlane in 1392 we know that the city was twice levelled to the ground by earthquakes, whose ruin the bloodthirsty Tartar chief tried in vain to rival. Since 1700, five other earthquakes have been recorded, after which scarcely a house remained standing. The first of these in 1721 claimed 80,000 victims, and half as many were buried in the débris of the city fifty-nine years later. Nevertheless the city is today the most flourishing in Persia, with a population of 200,000 souls, capital of the richest of the provinces of Iran, where 2,000,000

inhabitants cultivate the broad flat valleys that lie between rugged, desolate mountains.

This is an excellent commentary on the old theory that war, with its accompanying burning of villages, girdling of trees, and destruction of irrigating systems, was one of the chief causes of desolation, and that the hand of man could reduce a comparatively fertile country to a desert. The province which, with the possible exception of Khorassan in the north-east, has suffered most from war and misgovernment, is, and always has been, the most prosperous in Persia, with a population four times as dense as the sum of the other provinces. Meanwhile other provinces, especially those near the great desert of Persia, have suffered the most extreme ups and downs, although almost never invaded. At times they have been powerful kingdoms, with large cities; they have poured out hordes of invaders into Azerbaijan and Turkey; and finally they have relapsed, not once but at intervals, into the state of ruin and poverty in which we find them today.

The real cause of these fluctuations is not war, or industry, or the misuse of natural resources, but periodic climatic changes. Therefore the provinces that have the greatest ups and downs are those that feel them most, the desert provinces; and the province of the most constant prosperity is the province that feels them least, the province whose rainfall is conserved by the great mountains that hem it in, those of Kurdistan on the west, the

Caucasus on the north, and on the east the ranges that border the Caspian basin. This province at the same time is looked upon with greedy eyes by those whose fields are drying up, whose national or tribal consciousness is being awakened by the common need of bread. For this reason they leave their homes, and carry fire and sword into the fields of their more fortunate neighbours. Thus war among primitive peoples is caused by desolation and not desolation by war. The invaders of Azerbaijan have always come from the great deserts, where periods of plentiful rainfall have bred large populations, whom succeeding periods of drought have driven to seek elsewhere the sustenance that their jealous soil was unable to afford. Thus it was the Persians from the ill-favoured province of Fars that overthrew the Medes, who, driven by drought from Khorassan, had invaded Azerbaijan centuries before. The Arabs came in time from their desert, not moved primarily by religion as many have believed, for no man cares for his neighbour's religion if he can sit in peace beneath his own vine and fig tree, but by the drying up of the fertile pastures and productive fields that we know was going on in the time of Mohammed. The Mongols came from the steppes of middle Asia and the Turks from the periodically inhospitable desert of the Oxus.

Alexander too conquered Persia, but the Macedonian migration was caused by the opposite swing of the pendulum. A period of high rainfall

caused the flooding of their fields, and sent the mountain torrents in spate into the valleys, undermining the arable land, and carrying away the soil on the rocky slopes, where the village flocks had been wont to graze. Meanwhile in Asia all was prosperous; the people were busy in field and pasture, living in plenty, marrying and giving in marriage. They therefore fell an easy prey to the Macedonians, fierce mountaineers harried from their homes by the inexorable decrees of climate. They were not moved primarily by a love of conquest, but by a desire for bread, and once they had satisfied that desire they refused to follow their leader farther, and compelled him to give up his scheme of Indian conquest. The description of his return throws much light on the state of Persia at that time. He sent his elephants and heavy baggage across the great desert, where a caravan of camels would suffer today, while he and the bulk of his army made their way along the coast of Beluchistan, where the most mobile of caravans would perish today for lack of water and fodder.

Though there are plenty of ruins to be found in Tabriz, and the whole city bears the air of neglect that is characteristic of the Near East, it is not surrounded by deserted areas covering a space larger than the city itself as are most Persian provincial capitals, as well as Bagdad and Mosul, as I have elsewhere noted. The ruins are mostly those of disused public buildings, dating from

Seljuk or Mongol times. Around one of these the city life centres, the old ark, or citadel as we should call it. It is an enormous, shapeless mass of brick, rising above the city, three or four times as high as the surrounding buildings. No one knows who actually built it, or whether it was ever really finished, but tradition ascribes it to Genghis Khan. That it is still capable of use as a fortress was demonstrated during the Nationalist uprising of 1908–09, and the troubles that followed.

When the Shah Mohammed Ali—who has lived in exile in Odessa since 1909—in June, 1908, bombarded the Persian parliament out of existence, the city revolted, having been for some time the stronghold of the Nationalist party, on account of its prosperity and close touch with Western ideas. The best of the Shah's troops joined the revolt, and the others were quite useless, so he called in the Kurds to take their place. The city was invested by them and held out until April, 1909, when the siege was raised by the Russians to protect the European residents. This was all well enough, and the Nationalists appreciated outside assistance. But they soon found they had fallen from the frying-pan into the fire, and had less freedom under Russian military rule than under that of the Shah. Naturally they resented this and rebelled once more.

Trouble began without warning. Bodies of Russian troops were caught in various parts of the city and annihilated, and before long the city was

in the hands of the Nationalists, and the Russian camp in a state of siege. But reinforcements were soon rushed to the scene and the rebels driven back into the city. The bombardment that followed will long be remembered. The principal position of the rebels was the summit of the ark, from which they could pour a deadly fire into the camp of the Russians. The latter responded with field artillery, and being bad shots, dropped shells upon the American consulate, and the mission buildings, all of which were near the ark.

The Stars and Stripes were flown from all these buildings, but that made no difference to the Russians, and a perfect hail of bullets from both sides fell all around. When the Russians entered the city, fighting from street to street, they reached the vicinity of the American girls' school, where the ladies in charge had fastened their flag to one of the chimneys. A group of soldiers climbed on the roof and began to unfasten it. They were routed however by the appearance of one of the ladies, who came up through a trap door, re-fastened the flag in spite of the hail of bullets, and returned unscathed.

Gradually the Russians made their way through the streets, arriving at last before the ark. There a few desperate defenders held out until so weak from lack of food and water that no further resistance was possible. The final scene, visible from all parts of the city, was a row of corpses, hanging

from a large gibbet on the very summit of the historic fortress.

The original incursion of the Russians had been to support the Nationalists, but now a new Shah sat on the throne at Tehran, a boy of twelve, and a régime was instituted under Russian control. So the reactionaries were no longer in favour, and a Royalist governor, newly appointed to Tabriz, received the approbation of the conquerors. Terrible as had been the losses during the Kurdish siege and the Russian street fighting, they were forgotten when this man began his excesses. He set out to avenge the Royalists, and incidentally keep in Russian favour by including their enemies in the list of slain. Gibbets were erected in all conspicuous parts of the city, on the walls and before public buildings. A ghastly crop of strangled bodies appeared upon them, renewed from time to time. If any man had a personal grudge against a city notable or owed a debt to a prominent merchant, he mentioned his name to the governor, and his place knew him no more. In the streets and bazaars the bodies of lesser men were hanged from time to time as a warning, and not always by the neck. Men were suspended by their feet for a day and then hacked in two with an ax; others were beheaded, and many were mutilated and tortured in a fashion that defies description. Meanwhile the Russians stood by, giving a quiet word of encouragement now and then, well knowing that all this barbarity was paving the way for

the seizure of Azerbaijan, and its reduction to the status of a Russian province; an aim that is now practically an accomplished fact.

The bazaars that lie at the foot of the ark are still quite Oriental, showing little or no sign of Western influence. There are the same roofed streets, the same narrow booths, where the dealer squats on his heels in easy reach of all his stock in trade; the same confusion of picturesque types and costumes, that we had witnessed in other places. They never lost their fascination, however, and we were no less interested in our surroundings than we had been in Bagdad. There were a few new sights and scenes and the costumes in the streets were distinctly those of Iran, not of Arabia.

Among other things we saw the great rug warehouse of the Zieglers, the greatest European trading company in Persia. It was in a quiet square beside the bazaar, which it shared with other warehouses and the company's counting-house. Passing through a large doorway under a lofty pointed arch we entered a great barnlike room, as big as a church. The walls all around were piled high with bales from all parts of Persia, collected by the company's agents for the European and American market, in spite of the disturbed state of the country. Europeans, in conventional tail coats, were measuring and invoicing a lot of large carpets for shipment, while Persian *ferashes* were spreading them out of the floor one after the other. They were carpets of Kerman and Ispahan,

valued at so much a square foot, and as they were of unusually large size the values ran to almost fabulous amounts. That shipment duly recorded, a lot of prayer rugs followed, beautiful pieces from Shiraz and Kermanshah, decorated with the most exquisite patterns in the subdued shades of the favourite vegetable dyes. Piled up on the floor in the dim light of the great warehouse, that shipment was worth a king's ransom; once arrived in America, and displayed on Fifth Avenue, whither it was billed, it would command an almost unbelievable sum. We were told that the contents of the whole warehouse were worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Some distance from the bazaar, in a mean quarter of the city, lie the ruins of what was once the masterpiece of Persian architectural craftsmanship, the Blue Mosque. It dates from the days of Alp-Arslan, the Seljuk conqueror, and was used for many generations as the principal Sunni place of worship in Persia. But that sect has been replaced by the Shia in Tabriz, and the old mosque has been allowed to go to ruin, in part indeed destroyed. The arch of the great doorway still stands, a marvel of blue and white tilework that gives the mosque its name. Within is a magnificent hall of exquisite faïence, that has stood the ravages of time and religious jealousy surprisingly well. The last vestiges of the roof are gone, and the upper part of the walls are slowly crumbling away, but the lower parts and the pointed arches are

The Blue Mosque at Tabriz, Interior

largely intact. The inner court is surrounded by a wainscoting of alabaster, creamy white with yellow marblings, carved with a band of intricate arabesques. The whole building is at once a monument to Persian art, and a blot on the name of those who have let the chief treasure of their city go to rack and ruin on account of religious jealousy. There is only one thing to be said for this fanaticism: it does not object to foreigners prying into this old Sunni building, while Shia mosques are absolutely closed to all infidels.

We made a number of calls on prominent officials, Persians and Russians, during our stay in Tabriz, and were always received with courtesy. Mr. Paddock, the American consul, also extended to us the most cordial hospitality. Among other things relating to the recent events in the city he showed us the rifle that had belonged to a young American named Baskerville. He had come out, fresh from Princeton University, to teach in the mission college, and was killed leading a sally against the Kurds during the siege of 1909.

Among others we were received by the family of a young man who had been in school and college with me, and was at the time in America with two other members of the family. The members of this Kallantar family, though occupying prominent positions in the local government, were Nationalist sympathizers, and took active parts in the revolution of 1908. After the uprising against the Russians they had been forced to fly the city, their

houses had been plundered, and their property confiscated. They had recently been restored to favour, however, and succeeded in regaining their property and much of their former prestige.

Driving out to the suburb where they lived, we passed through ruinous outbuildings, into a garden that was just recovering from an era of neglect. The house still lay partly in ruins but we were led into a large room, furnished with several high windows, and thickly carpeted with Tabriz rugs. The only furniture consisted of bent-wood chairs ranged around the wall, and a few stands for the inevitable glasses of tea. We were received by my friend's father and an elderly uncle of his. The former was a tall man, with very dark features, wearing a blue broadcloth suit in the style of the better class, and very handsome, but for the stiff carriage that Persian men affect. While we were drinking the three small glasses of tea that etiquette requires, and trying to keep our feet from being too conspicuous, so as not to offend our hosts who sat with theirs tucked well under their seats, we gave the proud father all the news we could about his sons in distant America.

While he was thanking us in the effusive Persian manner, his brother entered, and we had the pleasure of meeting this man, who is virtually the head of the family, and chiefly responsible for its revolutionary sympathies. Once high in favour at court he married the Shah's sister, but later, representing Tabriz in the national parliament,—the

Majlis as it is called,—he escaped with difficulty the vengeance of his brother-in-law. He tried to dissuade his fellow-Nationalists from making the disastrous attack on the Russians, and brought down on himself their enmity as well as that of the Royalists. He was one of the first to be haled forth after the fall of the rebels, was led under one of the gibbets, the noose was dropped over his shoulders, and he was about to be hoisted into the air to strangle slowly, when a messenger from the governor ordered the execution stayed. His wife's intercession had saved his life, but he was thrown into prison, and escaped with difficulty. For months he wandered from village to village, all but starving, until he was finally pardoned and his property restored.

Beside the house was a high-walled garden where we walked among young fruit trees, beds of tulips, and stately poplars. The Persian loves a garden, and all the better-class houses are provided with them. It is a natural consequence of the general aridity of the country, and the crowning glory of the garden is always a pool of water, in which the plants are reflected.

On the whole we found Tabriz a city of fascinating interest, not soon to be forgotten. Tragic as has been its history, ancient and modern, it has preserved a character of its own, and deserves to rank with Cairo, Constantinople, and Bagdad, as a typical Moslem centre.

CHAPTER XV

CONCLUSION

FROM Tabriz we reached the Russian frontier in a huge auto bus that runs regularly over the splendid military road, to the railway terminus at Julfa. Julfa was once an important Armenian centre, but its ancient prestige has now entirely departed, and there remains only a dirty, offensive Russian frontier town. After being shamefully robbed by a vicious-looking set of customs officers, we succeeded in catching the one daily passenger train to Tiflis with the welcome assistance of an English commercial traveller. Then followed twenty-four hours in the train during which we passed under the very shadow of Ararat, through the heart of Russian Armenia.

Russian railway carriages are comfortable enough, and the place of dining-cars is taken by clean, pleasant station restaurants, where the train stops at convenient intervals for meals. Speed is no consideration in this distant corner of the Czar's Empire, and the trains potter along in an indifferent way that savours decidedly of the East.

Tiflis however is quite like a provincial town of

The Russian Autobus that Connects Tabriz with the Caucasian Railway

European Russia, having lost all the Oriental character it possessed a generation ago. As we bumped over the crossings into the railway station, Edwin Warfield remarked that we might almost be running into Philadelphia. We agreed that we preferred Bagdad, and would take a horse in preference to a railway carriage, and let Asoufi's charcoal brazier do for our buffet, whenever we again had an opportunity.

Picturesque as is the situation of Tiflis, it is in a hollow without mountain views. But it is the terminus of one of the most striking scenic highways in the world. This is the splendid military road across the Caucasus to Vladikavkaz. We found this section a wild jumble of deep gorges, splendid valleys, and towering peaks, that shame the Alps, and are not to be compared with anything in Europe. The natives, sturdy hillmen in long-skirted Circassian coats and huge sheepskin hats, yield nothing to the Kurds in barbaric appearance. That this region has not become a tourist's haunt, a mountaineer's paradise, is due solely to the backwardness of the country and the lack of proper accommodations.

Tiflis was once the capital of Georgia, the home of a gallant race of open-handed swashbucklers, whose picturesque costume is still common in the streets. But the old Tiflis is gone and instead we saw an imitation of Europe, ugly brick houses, with tin roofs, a museum, a picture gallery, pretentious parks, and slums,—foul, narrow allies

full of white-faced women and dirty children, homes of the labourers who bear the burden of European civilization. In Turkey we saw no such thing. There were beggars and dervishes, the halt, the lame, and the blind, but they did not suffer for lack of food, and there were no slums.

From Tiflis we reached the port of Batum on the Black Sea, and there boarded an Austrian steamer for the Bosphorus. The cities of the Turkish coast are strange mixtures of East and West, Ottoman and Byzantine, as is the Sultan's capital itself. With its Byzantine mosques, its bazaars, its European stores, and crowds of people in many garbs it seems an anomaly to the Western visitor, a bit of Asia in Europe. But we who had come from the eastward knew that it was really an European city in most essentials, and that Asia was far away on the other side of Anatolia, beyond the portals of the great gateway we had but lately traversed.